

Brief History
of The
Church of Christ

1859


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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

FIRST PERIOD.

FROM THE EFFUSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT
PENTECOST, TO THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE.

[A.D. 33 to A.D. 324.]

I.—THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

It is presumed that our youthful readers are acquainted with the Acts of the Apostles, and that they take delight in this interesting and precious book of Scripture. They will, therefore, be glad to see the narration continued where St. Luke, who wrote it, leaves off, which is on St. Paul's arrival at Rome. But before we commence relating the events which followed immediately after this, we must refer to parts of St. Luke's narrative. Our history will require the best attention of all young persons, especially as it will bring before them many things which probably they have never heard of before, although the accounts we have of them are not new, but very ancient.

Our Lord had promised to his disciples that he would make them fishers of men; and, in Matt. xiii. 47, he shows them, by a parable, what sort of a capture they were to make: not one for the hurt or destruction of those who should be brought into the gospel net, but for the salvation of many from the great Leviathan; and this salvation an everlasting one. Neither was it to be a capture made, as it were, with the hook, by which those who should be caught would only be deceived and wounded; but it was to be made as with a net, into which the fish should be collected together, both "bad and good," small and great.

This promise of Christ very soon began to be fulfilled. The first time that St. Peter cast the gospel net, which was only ten days after our Lord's ascension, he drew away by it three thousand at once. If our young readers have ever seen an assembly of three thousand persons, which they may possibly have done, they will recollect how very great a multitude this was; and we shall have to look long into the history of the church of Christ before we find another such a capture made at once. But what is even this great multitude, compared with the millions which have since been brought into the Christian church! It is only as a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field, and it became a great tree, so that the fowls of the air lodged in the branches thereof, Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

In a few days afterwards, Acts iv. 4, the first Christian church at Jerusalem received an additional increase of two thousand souls, making five thousand in all; whereas, before the effusion of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, their number amounted only to about a hundred and twenty, Acts i. 15.

Such, then, was the commencement of the Christian church; for the assembly at Jerusalem, who were brought to true faith in Christ at the feast of Pentecost, was the first Christian community or church. These first Christians, whose number continually increased, (compare Acts ii. 47, with xi. 5—7, and xvi. 5,) constituted a true and pure church of Christ, and showed, by their lives and conversation, that they had really received the good tidings of the Saviour, and had undergone a change of disposition and character. Even their unbelieving Jewish brethren stood in a kind of awe of them, and for a time did not venture to injure them. The whole company were of one heart and one mind; all were bound to one another in love, and each was ready to supply his brethren's wants out of his own means. The wealthier members of the church sold their houses and lands, and the money was deposited in a common stock for the maintenance of

their poorer brethren. This common stock was under the direction and management of the apostles, till persons were appointed to the business, who were called deacons. The Christians at Jerusalem met together every day for edification; and they frequently held social feasts of love, and celebrated the Lord's supper. If any one refused to comply with the order of the church, or conducted himself with offence, he was affectionately and seriously admonished for his fault; and, when this was of no avail, he was excluded. When any one wished to join the community of these disciples of Jesus, and for that purpose to be baptized, he was only asked whether he believed that Jesus is the Christ, (the Messiah, the promised Saviour of the world;) and if he answered in the affirmative, he was not refused baptism. This served to show the Jews that the apostles had no intention of introducing a new religion, but that they only preached the accomplishment of what the Israelites had so long expected, and consequently that they stood upon the foundation of Moses and the prophets.

There was no reason, in general, to fear that many would resolve upon this profession of Christ, unless they believed with the heart: as the mere profession required great self-denial. They had to acknowledge publicly as their Lord and King that very Jesus of Nazareth, who had been ignominiously crucified; and this was, to most of the Jews, such a "stumbling-block," that nothing but special Divine influence could make the gospel to them "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Moreover, the peaceful days of the Church soon terminated. When the young tree had gained sufficient strength, the Lord permitted storms and tempests to assault and shake it. This, however, only served to make it strike its roots still deeper, and to diffuse the sweetness of its blossoms to a greater extent.

After the death of Stephen, who was the first Christian martyr, arose the first persecution against the Christians at Jerusalem. Some of them were thrown

into prison, and others put to death. The rest were scattered abroad, and carried the word of life into all the towns of Judea and Galilee, to Samaria, to Phœnicia and Syria, and to the island of Cyprus. Thus was fulfilled what is written in Mark xvi. 20. The apostles, who had filled up the vacancy occasioned by the apostasy of Judas, Acts i. 26, and who had already, in the days of our Lord's ministry, made the first trial of their activity and efficiency in the apostleship, Luke ix. 6, etc., now for the most part left Jerusalem, and went to their respective provinces of labour in other countries; only a few of them still abode at Jerusalem. Also, besides them, there were found among the first Christians good men, who were useful as teachers and superintendents, Acts vi. 5. Their preaching was mightily confirmed, both in Jerusalem and at other places, by gifts of miracles and wonderful works, Mark xvi. 20; Acts ii. 43; iii. 6—8; v. 12—16; xix. 11, 12, etc. At this time it was that the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia found, on his journey home, a trea-



sure of more value than all those treasures over which he presided; and we are not surprised that he went on his way rejoicing. It is very probable that he made his countrymen at home acquainted with its value.

This first persecution of the Christian church brings us also acquainted with Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. It is true that the family of Cornelius, at Cæsarea, was added to the church of Christ by St. Peter's means, but the special province of St. Peter's labours was afterwards exclusively among the Jews, as that of St. Paul was to preach the gospel to the heathen. The manner of his conversion was very remarkable. Suppose some individual in any town should outrage the king's government, and persecute his loyal fellow-subjects, and the king should go himself in person to that town, remonstrate and reason with him, bring him to his right mind, and then invest him with an important office under his government, would it not be inferred that the king must have high expectations of the future usefulness of this person, in showing him such condescension? The conversion of Saul was something like this. God here went out of his ordinary way. He was not caught in the common net, but taken by the immediate hand of the Almighty. This apostle is further remarkable for his having suffered so much for Christ's sake. Five times was he scourged in the Jewish, and thrice in the Roman way of punishment; once was he stoned; four times he suffered



shipwreck; a night and a day was he in the deep; he underwent a great variety of other perils, hardships,

and privations on his travels, and at last sacrificed his life as a martyr to the cause of Christ. But the most remarkable part of his history is his wonderful activity for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. No sooner had he, who had been a persecutor of the Christians, been baptized at Damascus, than he preached in the synagogues of the Jews, and testified to them that Jesus is the Messiah. Shortly after this, he travelled with Barnabas over the island of Cyprus, and then through Asia Minor: and on this journey the Jews so resolutely opposed him, that he declared to them, that in future he would address himself to the Gentiles, and carry to them that message of eternal life which had been rejected by the Jews. Among the Gentiles he found a more welcome reception. Great multitudes of them were converted by his ministry, and he was enabled to plant Christian churches in almost every city.

The Gentiles were at that time prepared in many ways for receiving a new and better kind of knowledge and worship. Many of them had become weary of idolatry, because they had begun to perceive that they had been deluded by it; their wisest men, with all their thinking and reasoning, having never been able to arrive at any clear and satisfactory belief, because they were without a Divine revelation. At the same time, through certain ancient predictions which had been preserved among the heathen nations, an expectation had just at that period spread widely among them, that a Deliverer of the nations was about to appear in the world, who should establish a new religion, and restore the golden age of happiness to mankind. But still, what was to the Jews a stumbling-block could not but appear to the Gentiles as foolishness; namely, that the salvation of the world should proceed from one who had ignominiously died upon the cross. Hence, of the Gentiles, it was only a portion who arrived at faith in Christ, "as many as were ordained" (or disposed) "to eternal life."

On his second and third journeys through Asia

Minor and Grecco, Paul was equally successful in converting many Gentiles to the faith of Jesus; and he established Christian churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Troas, and Miletus. On his last return to Jerusalem he was arrested there, and was kept a prisoner two years at Cesarea, from whence he sailed by Crete and Melita, (Malta,) as a captive to Rome, twenty years after his conversion to Christ.

Rome was then the metropolis of the world, and was itself a kind of world in miniature. The finest and wealthiest countries of Europe, of North Africa, and of Western Asia, were under her dominion. This city, built upon seven hills, was of great extent, and its inhabitants have been computed at three millions. It had seventeen hundred and eighty palaces, among which that of the emperor Nero was the most splendid. Rome likewise contained more than four hundred idol temples, the most magnificent of which was the Capitol, or temple of Jupiter, on the Capitoline Hill. This temple was capable of holding a very large multitude of persons; and its embellishments may have cost about a million of money. Into this great, magnificent, and proud city, Paul was brought as a prisoner, whither he had for many years been desiring to come, Acts xix. 21; Rom. xv. 23. What may we suppose were his thoughts and feelings, when he beheld its palaces, its idolatrous temples, its voluptuous population! You may, perhaps, have read the history of Cortez, how, with his handful of Spanish adventurers, he advanced towards the large and powerful city of Mexico, to conquer and take it. Paul advanced towards Rome still more impoverished and weak than Cortez; and yet, in truth, he also had thoughts of conquest: his intention was nothing less than to bring this city into subjection to his Lord and Master; and he knew that, sooner or later, such a conquest would certainly be effected. But we can easily imagine how many a haughty Roman senator would pass by the poor tent-maker as hardly worthy of his notice, little

imagining him to be the ambassador of One whose name, in a few centuries, should fill the whole world, and before whom all the gods of Rome would fall to the ground, and moulder in the dust.

Paul was suffered to dwell in his own hired house at Rome till his trial before the emperor; he was, however, in the continual custody of a soldier, to whom he was chained; but this did not prevent him from continuing his apostolic work, of teaching by discourse and by letters. His preaching found a way from his



quiet confinement to the imperial palace itself; and several persons of the court were, by the grace of God, added to the little company of the disciples at Rome. Had he been permitted to preach at liberty about the city, as a free man, the general attention which his bold addresses would have excited, would probably have soon occasioned him to be silenced altogether; but no one would think of taking any alarm from an obscure prisoner in confinement.

After two years spent in this captivity, Paul answered for himself before Cæsar, and was set at liberty; and it is supposed by some, that he now set out on his mission for Spain. This he had long resolved to do,

as we learn from Rom. xv. 24. Indeed, Clement of Rome, a disciple of the apostle Peter, tells us as much; and by the second century we find a numerous body of Christians in that country. Paul, on his return from Spain, came to Crete, where he left Titus, to set in order the things that were wanting in the churches which the apostle had newly planted there, and to ordain elders in every city, Tit. i. 5. After this, we find him at Nicopolis, on the borders of Illyria, where he had before preached the gospel, Rom. xv. 17—19; and, finally, he returned to Rome, probably as a prisoner, where he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, and where, it is said, he was beheaded by command of Nero, sixty-seven years after the birth of Christ. To places which he was unable to visit in person, or where he could no longer remain, he appointed other excellent Christian teachers, who had been fitted for the purpose by familiar intercourse with himself, Acts xiv. 23. The names of Barnabas, Silas, Marcus, Lucas, Timotheus, Titus, and others, are well known in that capacity. What that great apostle effected, by his faithfulness and unwearied labours at Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, and in the towns and countries round about those cities, was of such extent and importance, that he might well say of himself and of the other apostles, "I laboured more abundantly than they all," 1 Cor. xv. 10. They were, however, all devoted to their work; and though we have no such particular account of their labours as we have of those of St. Paul, still it is well worth while to collect together such notices as we have of them.

Peter was selected by the Lord Jesus to make the first beginning of the evangelization of Jews and Gentiles. As long as the apostles remained at Jerusalem, he was generally their foremost speaker. After this he preached the gospel to the Jews dispersed throughout Syria and Asia Minor. He was subsequently for a time in the ancient city of Babylon, where a Christian congregation was soon gathered. At length he is said to have come to Rome, and to

have died there as a martyr, by crucifixion. James, the son of Zebedee, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, was slain with the sword at Jerusalem, by command of Herod. James the Less, who was also one of the apostles, is said to have had his province of labour in Spain; but of this there is no certain information, as he is generally confounded with a third James, the Lord's brother, who was bishop of Jerusalem, but not one of the twelve. It is of him that St. Paul speaks, in 1 Cor. xv. 7, Gal. ii. 9, and who is mentioned in several passages of the Acts of the Apostles; and he it was who wrote the inspired epistle of James in the New Testament. The epistle of Jude was written by Jude, the brother of this James. Being of the kindred of our Lord, James was much respected in the Christian church. He was regarded as one of its "pillars," and was surnamed "the Just." After he had presided over the Christian church of Jerusalem for thirty-three years, he suffered martyrdom in that city. Of the apostle Andrew it is related, that he preached the gospel in countries near the Black Sea, and at last died by crucifixion at Patræ, in Achaia. The apostle Philip is said to have preached in Scythia and Phrygia, and to have died, at an advanced age, at Hierapolis. Bartholomew and Thomas are related to have carried the tidings of Christ to India; and the Christians of St. Thomas in India, who still consist of numerous churches on the Malabar coast, deduce their origin immediately from the apostles. Of the lives and labours of Matthew, Simon of Cana, Judas Thaddeus, and Matthias, we have no accounts to be depended on; we can only be certain that each performed the part assigned him by the command of Jesus, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature!"

Two of the apostles' fellow-labourers, Mark and Luke, have left histories of the life and wonderful works of Christ. The apostle Matthew wrote his history earlier, and the apostle John much later, than they. As Christ and his work was the chief subject

of the apostles' preaching, wherever they went, the Jews and Gentiles who resided out of Palestine would naturally inquire and wish to know who this Jesus was; where and when he lived; and what had been done by him. They would desire to have a particular and connected account of his life, miracles, actions, etc. Matthew, therefore, under the direction of God the Holy Spirit, composed a history of what he had seen and heard. Mark and Luke, under the same Divine direction, wrote what they had learned from the apostles. Mark probably wrote his history for the use of the Christians at Rome; and Luke more immediately for the information of an eminent person named Theophilus; but all were thus the appointed instruments of Jesus Christ, to instruct and refresh many thousands of Christians in all ages and nations—none of whom would have known where to obtain any certain and complete account of their Saviour's life upon earth, had not these blessed evangelists, at the command of Jesus, related all so clearly and accurately.

The Christian churches, of which St. Luke informs us in the book of "Acts," and the gathering and planting of which was the work of the apostles, particularly of St. Paul, would no doubt have prospered best, could the apostles have resided constantly in the midst of them; but this was impossible, as there were many more churches than apostles. Paul, wherever he tarried to preach, had only time enough to plant a church; he had then to proceed to another place, and leave the tender plant exposed to various storms; nor was it everywhere that he could find, as at Corinth, a diligent Apollos to water it after him. Hence there was reason to fear for the safety and welfare of many such a tender plant—and this was a matter of much anxiety to the careful planter. He endeavoured, therefore, even from a distance, to contribute in some measure to the healthy growth and strength of his plantations. This was the occasion of those epistles to Christian churches and individuals, in which he

imparts to them things new and old, out of the abundance of his knowledge; warning them against errors of doctrine and practice, and animating them to faith and persevering steadfastness. Our readers must be familiar with his epistles to the churches of Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colosse, and Thessalonica; with his letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon; and with his epistle to the Hebrews, which is as valuable to us, and as much addressed to ourselves, as it was to the primitive Jewish converts. It is true that Paul, when he wrote his epistles, was not writing specially to us; but the Spirit of Christ, which was in him, had nevertheless all the followers of Christ in view. With the same intent, Peter, John, James, and Jude, wrote their epistles to a variety of Christians converted from among Jews and Gentiles. At last, the book of the Apocalypse was added to these; in which God sets before the eyes of all ages, especially of the last period of time, his whole determinate counsel respecting the world at large; and this book completes the canon of the New Testament. The body of Scripture was thus perfected by little and little; and, therefore, we are not to suppose that the apostles and their fellow-labourers went into the Jewish synagogues with a New Testament under their arm, and then read a chapter out of it, and preached upon it. As there were no printed books in those days, the various writings of the apostles were transcribed separately, and thus circulated among primitive Christians: the epistle to the Colossians, for instance, was also sent to Laodicea, Col. iv. 16; and it was not till a considerable time after all the apostles had left this world, that all the writings of the New Testament were collected into a volume.

As long as the apostles lived, they were universally confided in, and looked up to by the primitive Christians; and each controversial subject, as it arose, was brought to them for their decision; thus, when there was a doubt whether Gentile converts ought to be circumcised, like the Jews, and to observe all the

customs of the Mosaic ritual, the question was laid before the apostles at Jerusalem, and they answered in the negative. As to the officers in the church, at that time, there were, besides the apostles, persons called deacons and deaconesses, or assistants, whose business it was to distribute the alms of the church among its poorer members, and to take charge of the sick; and there were others called evangelists, who travelled from place to place to preach the gospel, to gather new churches, and to visit those already gathered. These are to be distinguished from those pastors and teachers who were stationary in the several churches. The ascended Saviour, "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv. 11—13. The office of public teacher in general, at that time, was not so strictly separate and distinct as it afterwards became; for, in the Christian churches of those days, there was an abundance of extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, particularly the gift of prophecy, or the power of speaking on Divine subjects, and even of foretelling things to come, by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and the persons who possessed these gifts were called prophets, Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xiv. 1. These gifts, of revealing mysteries, speaking in foreign languages, healing the sick, working miracles, and the like, 1 Cor. xii. 8—10, were very frequently manifested in the first Christian churches, especially in that at Corinth, and could not fail to draw the attention of Jews and Gentiles to Christianity, and to assist in gaining them to its belief.

But the days approached in which they were no longer to enjoy outward rest, and be edified in peace and quietness. For as early as the year 65 from the birth of Christ, began that series of heathen

persecutions, which continued with more or less intermission to the fourth century. Of these persecutions there are generally reckoned ten principal ones. The first arose in the very centre of the heathen world, in Rome, immediately after St. Paul had quitted it for Spain; so that, happily for the church militant, he was thus preserved two years longer. Nero, notorious only for his cruelty, who had put to death his tutors and guardians, his own mother, and his own wife, did not concern himself particularly about the Christians at the beginning of his reign; but he soon found opportunity of discharging his fury upon them also. His vanity, surpassing all bounds, induced him to set the whole city of Rome on fire, that he might make himself a name by building a more splendid city upon its ruins. Being fired in several places at once, it continued burning for seven days together, till five-sevenths of its buildings were reduced to ashes and ruins. It was easy to foresee the resentment of the citizens and inhabitants, should they learn that the emperor himself was the incendiary; but it was difficult for him to think of any other method of escaping their resentment, except one, which was more horrible than what he had already perpetrated: he adopted it however, and it was that of ascribing the whole guilt of it to the Christians. Vengeance accordingly broke loose upon the Christians in every quarter. They were sewed up alive in sacks, into which hemp was crammed about their bodies, and which being covered with pitch, were placed upright in long rows, and fastened to stakes, set on fire at the top, and used as torches or beacons to give light to the Romans at their nocturnal revels and games. Others were sewed up in skins of wild beasts, and torn in pieces by dogs, for the entertainment of the people. Others were fixed to crosses erected in Nero's gardens, or ignominiously executed by other torturing punishments. It was, probably, for the purpose of confirming and comfort-ing the little band of Christians, who survived this dreadful persecution, that Paul was so desirous to

return to Rome, where he was himself soon added to the noble army of martyrs.

It has been remarked by naturalists, that whenever there are any considerable eruptions of the burning mountains in Iceland, there is generally some disturbance in the volcanoes of Italy and Sicily, which gives reason for supposing that there is a subterraneous connexion between them. Something resembling this has often been found in the history of the Christian church. No sooner had the fire of persecution broken out at Rome, than the enemies of Christ were again up in arms at Jerusalem, and their vengeance fell upon James, the Lord's brother, who was bishop of that place. He was brought before the council, and when he publicly confessed that Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God, and will come in the clouds of heaven, he was thrown from an eminence, and stoned. While the stones were hurled at him, he exclaimed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" and immediately a blow with a club put an end to his life.

This, however, was one of the last acts of violence which the Jewish nation committed against the Christians; for the awful judgment of God, which Jesus had foretold, Luke xix. 43, 44, had already begun to overtake them. The Jews had never been patient under the Roman yoke, and the conduct of their last procurator, Gessius Florus, rendered it more odious to them than ever. The smothered fire of rebellion now burst into a flame, and spread rapidly through the nation. The many signs of the times had no effect upon this infatuated people. Only the Christians at Jerusalem, mindful of the admonition of Jesus, Luke xxi. 20, were prepared for suddenly quitting that city; and king Agrippa assigned them the little town of Pella, beyond Jordan, as their place of refuge. Others probably fled elsewhere; for the number was much too considerable to be contained in one small city. Jerusalem was besieged by the army of Vespasian, the Roman general; and when he was chosen emperor, his son Titus succeeded him in command of the siege.

The city was almost impregnable, so strongly was fortified by nature and art, and so strongly garrisoned. Just before Titus surrounded it, multitudes had come up from all parts of the country to the feast of the passover; and Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, affirms that more than a million and a half of persons were at this time shut up within its walls.

The last hour of this great city was now arrived; a city which was the most important that ever existed. When Abraham offered up his son Isaac on Mount Moriah, upon which Jerusalem's temple was afterwards built, the place was but a solitary wilderness. By the time that the children of Israel left Egypt a city had been built on the spot, which, at the allotment of Canaan, fell to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The city, as it then stood, was burned; but the Jebusites rebuilt, and so strongly fortified it, that they thought the blind and lame sufficient to defend it against David, who nevertheless took it, and made it his royal residence. Jerusalem, during his reign, and that of Solomon, was very splendid, and so abounded with riches, that silver was scarcely regarded more than the stones of the street. From Solomon it received its most glorious embellishment, in the erection of the temple, which was the wonder of the world. But this magnificent temple was destroyed with the city, by Nebuchadnezzar, and that which was erected in its place in troublesome times, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, was far inferior to the former. Another desolation came upon the city in the time of the Maccabees, whose heroic bravery, by the help of God, prevented its entire destruction. Herod the Great almost rebuilt the temple, and embellished it at a vast expense. When Christ appeared in it, which was the greatest honour it could have received, (as foretold by Haggai, ii. 9, that "the glory of this latter house should be greater than of the former,") it had been forty-six years receiving these embellishments and enlargements; and they were not entirely completed till just before the last siege of the city.

by the Romans. Thus, the temple had again become one of the most splendid edifices in the world, and was spoken of with admiration everywhere, Mark xiii. 1; and Titus himself wished nothing more earnestly than to be able to preserve it uninjured. But the words of Jesus must be fulfilled. Of what avail was it to the multitudes crowded within the walls of Jerusalem, that these walls were so strong, and their towers so high! The stones of these buildings could not serve them for bread, and all their provisions so entirely failed, that horrible famine was inevitable. Things arrived at such extremity, that even human flesh was eaten, and human blood was drunk! It is related that even women slew and ate their own children; to say nothing of other disgusting means used for sustaining life, as the eating of leather, mice, rats, and the like. To consummate these miseries, the population thus imprisoned in the city had split into most rancorous parties, who carried on a perpetual civil war within the walls, deluging the streets of Jerusalem with blood. It appeared, indeed, that the Jews were now to manifest to all the world, that God's judgment upon them was a righteous judgment. They had sinned most fearfully, and now they were most fearfully punished. At length, the Roman army burst into the city, and put to death all who opposed them; the temple was burned by the enraged soldiery, contrary to the express commands of Titus, and not one stone was left upon another: Jerusalem was utterly desolated, ninety-seven thousand Jews were led away captive, and eleven hundred thousand had perished in the siege.

Such was the end of that renowned city, which, even to this day, in its degraded state, the Arabians denominate The Holy City; and thus terminated the polity of the Jewish nation and their religious establishment. Its fall was doubtless intended by Providence to be beneficial to the cause of Christ. It was now clearly manifest to all, that Christianity, though sprung out of the Jewish religion, had nevertheless a

root of its own; and whereas Christians had hitherto been frequently confounded with Jews, to the disadvantage of the former, such confusion could exist no longer. The Christian church also thus became more independent of Jewish observances, which hitherto she had continued to regard with a kind of filial reverence, though they, in fact, prevented her own spiritual and free development. Christianity, as being the worship of God in spirit and in truth, is to have no central place, either at Jerusalem or at Rome.

It is uncertain whether any one of the apostles, except John, lived to witness the destruction of Jerusalem. This apostle had, probably some time before that event, retired to Ephesus, in Asia Minor. But when a new persecution arose against the Christians, in the reign of Domitian, after the church had enjoyed rest for thirty years, this apostle was summoned before the emperor. Tertullian relates, that Domitian ordered him to be thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, and that he came out of it unhurt. He was then banished to Patmos, in the Ægean Sea, and here he wrote his book of the Apocalypse.

It was about this time that Domitian caused inquiry to be made whether any of the descendants of David's family were to be found; for, having heard that a Messiah of David's line was to be King of all kingdoms, he would have been glad to make away with him, and to rid himself of his own apprehensions respecting him. This inquiry occasioned two grandsons of Jude, the Lord's brother, to be brought before the emperor; but when they showed him their hands hardened with common labour, and thus convinced him that they were poor people, from whom he had nothing to fear, he dismissed them with contempt. This persecution, to which many Christians, especially in Asia Minor, fell a sacrifice, ceased soon afterwards, on the death of Domitian, who was assassinated.

St. John, being now set at liberty, returned to Ephesus, where he afterwards wrote his three epistles and his gospel history, in all of which he refers to

false teachers, who at that time were endeavouring to corrupt the church of Christ. He died, at a very advanced age, about the close of the first century. In the latter days of his life he used to be continually



repeating the exhortation, "Little children, love one another!" A simple lesson; yet Christians have been learning it for eighteen centuries, and have not learned it well unto this day.

II.—THE INCREASE OF THE CHURCH UNDER PERSECUTION.

Soon after the time of the apostles, the church evidently diminished in spiritual life and energy, as she became more outwardly prosperous. She no longer exhibited that noble simplicity and spiritual vigour, that holy zeal, fixed consistency, and firm union, that strong faith and pure doctrine, which distinguished her in the age of the apostles. These things, at least, no longer appeared in their former glory; and it seems as if, immediately after the last apostle's decease, every

thing had begun to retrograde. That more rapid declension, into which the church fell after the fourth century, was prevented during the preceding period, chiefly by those violent persecutions, which served to keep alive that zeal which would otherwise have grown cold, and to purify the fine gold from the dross. But, Requisite as the fire of persecution generally is for the wider spread of Christianity, and beautiful as are the fruits of faith, and love, and hope, which it serves to bring to light, such troublous times are not so favourable to the maturing of the church in the knowledge of the truth. Storms and tempests stir the soil, and promote vegetation; but the cluster which has ripened in the sun is that which yields the richest wine. Yet our own more peaceful times have reason enough to emulate many excellences of the troubled church of those days.

At the close of the apostolic age, Jerusalem lay in ruins; yet the light which the Lord had kindled there was not quenched, but was spread abroad in various countries. The successors of the apostles knew and observed their important obligations to proceed with the holy work of publishing peace, wherever their predecessors had been removed by death. There remained immense tracts of heathen ground to be sown with the good seed, and the disciples of Jesus were far from allowing themselves to repose and slumber; for they must be faithful to the command of their Lord and Master, to "preach the gospel to every creature." Their work made considerable progress during the second and third centuries, but we have no such accurate accounts of it as we have of the labours of our missionaries in the present day; for, at that time, persons did more, and wrote less. In Palestine, even after its long and exterminating war, there survived a goodly number of Christian churches, which many of the Israelitish nation now joined, as their Jewish expectations had received a fatal blow in the destruction of their temple. At Tyre and Sidon, also, and at Damascus, there were many Christians, and the church

at Antioch, still maintained the important position which it held in the apostolic age. In the adjacent countries, and in those farther distant, the cause of Christ continued to advance with good effect. And yet in those days there were no missionary societies, nor missionary seminaries; for every Christian regarded himself as a missionary, and took every opportunity to testify of Him in whom he believed: neither was there any need of missionary funds; for the spread of the gospel was regarded by the Christian church as a common cause, in which every individual member took an interest, and bore part of the expense. And there were always enough willing-hearted persons to be found, who consecrated their whole lives to the blessed call of converting the heathen, and travelled about as evangelists to seek and open new ways in every direction for the triumphs of the gospel. In very early times, it found admission, and made great progress in Egypt, especially at Alexandria, where great numbers of the Jews resided; and it spread from thence across the Red Sea into Arabia, where Paul had previously scattered much good seed; and from that country it advanced even to India. How it arrived in Persia is not known; but it is certain that, in the third century, many believers already existed there. Ecclesiastical history informs us of the means by which the Iberians (of Georgia, in the south of Russia) became christianized. A captive Christian female prayed to Christ for the recovery of her master's sick child, and it recovered. The queen was also recovered from a severe illness by the intercessions of this Christian female slave. The king, her husband, being one day in great peril while hunting, remembered the God of the Christians, and prayed to him for help. That help was vouchsafed; he embraced Christianity, and even instructed his queen and subjects in the Christian religion till preachers arrived from Rome. These occurrences took place between the years 320 and 330. So true is it, that sickness may subserve to health, and a poor female captive become

the harbinger of freedom. In Asia Minor, and particularly in its provinces of Ionia, and Phrygia, the kingdom of Christ had established its chief residence; and, only a few years after the death of St. John, Pliny, a Roman procurator of Bithynia, (another province of Asia Minor,) wrote to his imperial master, Trajan, saying, that throughout all the province, the temples and altars (of the idolaters) were deserted, and that there remained but few who brought offerings and gifts to the priests.

At the close of the period we are now considering, namely, at the council of Nice, in Bithynia, in the year 325, there were no fewer than three hundred and eighteen Christian bishops assembled, most of whom were of Asia Minor. Christianity had also taken firm root in Macedonia and Greece, and was still extending in those directions. As early as in the time of St. Paul, the sound of the gospel had reached Dalmatia and Illyricum, and had penetrated to the banks of the Danube; for the victorious arms of Augustus Cesar, having long ago forced their way thus far, had opened an entrance for the introduction of the gospel. To keep these countries the more securely, he had planted colonies on the banks of the Danube, which at the first amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand Roman settlers, and were augmented afterwards by successive emigrations. These colonies branched out till they extended as far as Upper Rhetia, (of the Grisons,) and laid the foundation of the present flourishing cities of Lorch, (in Austria,) Salzburg, Augsburg, Ratisbon, Bregenz, Trent, Bozen, Chur, etc. There was, naturally, considerable intercourse maintained between the colonies and the mother country; thus did these Roman colonists receive from her, among other good things, the blessings of Christianity; at least the first tidings of it came to them from thence. There were, probably, many Christians among the more recent settlers themselves; as well as among the Roman soldiers, who were marched into those provinces. Church history informs us of a

Roman legion, which bore the name of "the thundering legion," and which contained many Christians. When the emperor Aurelius was opposing the incursions of the Marcomanni and Quadi, near the Danube, he found himself in a great difficulty; for his soldiers were become very faint under the intense heat of the sun, and from violent thirst, while the enemy was just menacing an attack. The Christians of the thundering legion then fell upon their knees, and prayed to Jesus for help. A shower of rain immediately fell, which quenched the thirst of the army; and the storm which accompanied it so terrified the enemy, that the Romans were victorious. The emperor thought, indeed, that his heathen god Jupiter had sent this help, and he erected to him a splendid statue at Rome: so ignorant was he of the truth. This is related to have happened in the year 174. Tertullian tells us, that about this time, the fortresses, legions, and camps abounded with Christians.

Helvetia (Switzerland) was included within the empire as early as the year 60 after the birth of Christ. Roman fortresses were erected over the whole country, and Roman cities built; among which, Wifflsburg (Avenches) and Windisch were the most remarkable. These settlements may be regarded as the channels by which, in process of time, the living waters of the gospel would find their way into that mountainous country, where natural fountains give birth to large fertilizing rivers, which run to the northern seas and the Mediterranean. But the memoirs of the planting of the earliest Christian churches of this period are all corrupted with legendary traditions; and it is not till the time of Constantine that we ascertain the clearer light of Christianity as fully risen upon that country.

In Germany, the interior of which was then covered with vast impervious forests, and inhabited by savage warlike tribes, preparatory traces of civilization and Christianity can only be followed along the course of those great rivers, on the banks of which the dark forests first yielded to the light of day, and the rude

inhabitants first learned civilization by intercourse with their neighbours. The settlement of Roman colonies, and the spread of Christianity in Germany, went hand in hand in those directions, during the first three centuries; and it is on the borders of the Danube and the Rhine that we first meet with such colonies and Christian stations. Thus the church of Christ was enabled, in succeeding centuries, to spread into the very heart of the German provinces. We find cities founded, at a very early period, along the western bank of the Rhine, the names of which, at this day, are very familiarly known. Such were Rorach, (now called Augst,) Bâle, Breisach, Strasburg, Worms, Spire, Mayence, and especially Cologne, with the neighbouring city of Treves; which, even in those early times, were places of very considerable importance. Treves is said to have been the place of the first German Christian church. But by whose means or in what more particular manner, our holy religion was thus propagated along the Rhine, from one town to another, we are not informed. The ancient Germans seem to have advanced in knowledge, something in the manner of young persons at many places of education, where they first become acquainted with heathen authors, and, by and by, with the original Scriptures of the apostles and prophets. So the Romans, at their first settlement in Germany, introduced into it their heathen learning, before Christianity found entrance there: and though this Roman idolatrous lore was not much better than that of Germany, yet these barbarous tribes, by exchanging one sort of learning for another, would become better prepared to exchange their native errors for purer instruction. However this may be, we find it related by Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, in the second century, that the Christian churches in Germany, inhabiting the provinces of the Upper and Lower Rhine, had the same creed and doctrines as the Christians in the east; and, twenty-five years afterwards, the same declaration was made by Tertullian.

The wild regions of Germany were even shuddered at by their Roman invaders, who had come from the beautiful country of Italy. The natives lived in miserable huts, and in the rudest state of nature. They maintained themselves by pillage and hunting. Their lofty mountains were glazed with snow and ice the greater part of the year, and their plains were covered with dark extensive forests, in which they performed their idolatrous worship. So late as the fourth century, the Boden See (or Upper Lake of Constance) was so surrounded with impenetrable forests, that no traveller could approach it, except where the Roman legions had opened a way with the axe. The winters were long and severe, and wild beasts and serpents abounded.

The country of modern France was then peopled by the Gales, or Gauls, (Galli.) Before the invasion of the Romans it was a wilderness, covered with morasses, forests, and heaths. But, when the Romans had made themselves masters of Gaul, vines and fruit-trees began to be planted, and cities to be built. The Gallic priests, called druids, had unbounded influence over the people; and, though their religious doctrines were not so silly and fabulous as those of other heathen nations, the religious rites they maintained were inhuman and bloody. In many places they had enormous idols, made of wicker-work or straw, which they filled with living human beings, and then set them on fire. So cruel was their superstition, that even their heathen conquerors, the Romans, witnessed it with horror. They, therefore, cut down or burned their idolatrous groves, and abolished the order of druidical priests, long before they were able to offer them the better gift of Christianity in the place of their barbarous religion.

No trace of Christianity can be found in Gaul before the middle of the second century; but, as the veil gradually withdraws from the history of the quiet commencement of the work of Christ in those countries, our attention is at once arrested by large

flourishing churches at Lyons, Vienna, Arles, etc., which had then become so numerous, that the heathen government thought it necessary to employ persecution to stop their further increase. The first seeds for this pleasant garden of Christ were probably brought from Asia Minor, either by the Asiatic legions of the Roman army, afterwards stationed in Gaul, or by evangelists, who came thither purposely to win souls to Christ. For we know that the earliest recorded bishops of those Gallic Christian churches, Nicetius, Pothinus, and Irenæus, were all of Asia Minor; so that from the very country whither, many hundreds of years before the Christian era, large bands of Gauls had emigrated, and whither they had even transplanted their name of Galati, or Galatians, the first message of the peace of Christ came to the heathen mother country. Thus also Columbus, when he went to discover America, in search of gold for the liberation of Jerusalem from the Mohammedans, little thought that in future times missionaries would visit that city, from America, to preach the liberty wherewith the Son of God makes us free. We have not any more particular information how the waste wilderness of God became, in the Christian sense, a fruitful field; how the servants of Christ sowed the good seed; what difficulties they met with in doing it, or what preparations for receiving it they found already made. The history of the church of Christ leaves many such inquiries unanswered; and we shall not be able to obtain satisfactory replies to them till we arrive in another world.

No sooner does the church of Christ in Gaul begin to attract our notice in history, than we see the flames of persecution enveloping her. These, however, served only to render her more glorious, as we shall see hereafter. In the middle of the third century, seven missionaries are said to have come from Italy to Gaul, to have settled in different provinces of that country, and to have founded Christian churches. This, however, is all the information we have of them; and the gospel does not appear to have spread there

more generally till about the end of the period we are considering.

In Spain, likewise, Christianity, at a very early period, had taken firm root. The church of Spain has asserted, from time immemorial, that her origin was from the apostle Paul himself; which is confirmed by the testimony of Clement, already referred to. Beyond this we know nothing of the first planting of Christianity in that country. But the number of Christians must have been very considerable in Spain about the middle of the third century.

Of Britain, tradition relates that it received the first tidings of Christ by the personal ministry of St. Paul. Whether this was so or not, it is clear, from accounts given by various fathers of the church, that the gospel had reached Britain before the second century. Ancient authors relate, that a British chieftain, who for nine years fought successfully against the Romans in his own country, was made a prisoner, with his whole family, and carried in chains to Rome, where they became acquainted with Christians; and, upon their return to Britain, in the year 62, promulgated their new belief among their countrymen. Christians from Rome, who accompanied them, among whom Paul himself might have been one, are said to have assisted them in thus diffusing the gospel.

As to the idolatry of the druids, which originally existed in Britain as well as in Gaul, an old British historian relates, that the idols of his country had been as numerous as those of Egypt, and quite as mean and hideous; and that he had seen some of them, which had been carefully preserved as memorials to his own time. The Roman emperor Claudius, however, in the year 61, caused all druids that could be found to be put to death, and all their idol groves to be destroyed. But the establishment of Christian churches was slow in those times of perpetual warfare; and we cannot speak of any settled condition which they had attained in Britain till the arrival of more peaceful years, with the reign of Constantine.

As when a mariner approaches an unknown country, the shores of which are enveloped in mist, which being suddenly dissipated he sees at once the whole line of coast, with its beautiful towns, villages, and gardens, unexpectedly rising into view; so appears the northern coast of Africa, at the end of the second century, suddenly emerging from the obscurity of history: and along the whole line of that coast Christianity presents itself to our view, like a well-grown plantation which cannot have been of very recent origin. Yet we have no account at all by what hand the seed of eternal life was sown upon those heathen wilds, or by what hand it was watered: we can only conclude, that, in all probability, these services of love proceeded from Rome; for, between Rome and Carthage, which latter was the centre of the North African churches, a constant intercourse had all along been maintained. We owe the earliest information respecting Christianity in those parts to a writer whom we have repeatedly cited, and who was one of the most celebrated fathers of the church—namely, Tertullian, a presbyter at Carthage. In his time the Christian church had become so extensive in Africa, that he was able to write to the Roman procurator as follows:—"If you persist in persecuting the Christians of Africa, what then will you do with the many thousands of both sexes, of every condition and age, who will readily and openly profess themselves Christians in your presence? Do you think you will be able to find fuel and swords enough for burning and decapitating all these? Not less than a tenth of the whole population of Carthage will it be necessary for you to lead away to the slaughter, and among the victims will be your own relations and friends; yes, and men and women of the first consideration in this metropolis. If you have no mercy for us, have mercy on yourself, upon Carthage, and upon the whole province committed to your government." In another place he says:—"We everywhere hear our adversaries crying out, 'The whole city is beset with Christians; they are found in every corner of

our villages, castles, and islands.'” Indeed, before the middle of the third century, there were already in the province of Carthage no less than seventy bishops; and, about a century after this, not fewer than four hundred and forty-six.

Likewise into Upper Egypt had the sweet savour of the gospel penetrated from Alexandria; and, at the close of the second century, it had become to many a “savour of life unto life,” strengthening them to brave all the terrors of death under persecutions which raged at that period. In the course of the third century a school of catechumens was established at Alexandria; and this may be called the first missionary seminary, for it became of very singular service to the propagation of Christianity. The most distinguished of its teachers were Pantænus, Clement, and Origen. The spread of Christianity in Egypt was also considerably furthered by the early translation of the New Testament into the vernacular Coptic: it was thus rendered accessible to the common people. At the beginning of the fourth century, the truth had made such progress in that country, that in the Diocletian persecution, A.D. 303, the number of those who were beheaded there, for their confession of Christ, amounted, according to the testimony of Eusebius, to one hundred and forty thousand; while those who perished in prison, by severe slavery, or banishment, amounted to seven hundred thousand.

Having thus glanced at the frontier provinces of the Roman empire, we return to Rome itself, the centre of that wide dominion. Here the Christian church had most flourished ever since the destruction of Jerusalem; and though this metropolis of the world was every year adding to its moral depravation, and becoming more and more the scene of political conflicts; and though the fire of persecution burned there almost incessantly, still the number of Christians was ever on the increase, and, even under the immediate eyes of successive emperors, gained such strength, that all endeavours to extirpate them were ineffectual. About

the middle of the third century the church of Rome had one bishop, forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, as many sub-deacons, fifty public readers, exorcists, and door-waiters; and distributed its alms to one thousand five hundred of its members. Indeed, the Christians had increased so rapidly by the end of the second century, that Tertullian was enabled to tell the Roman emperor and senate to their face—"We are but of yesterday, and yet we have already filled all your possessions, your cities, islands, fortified places, councils, armies, corporations, palaces, yea, your very senate-house and courts of judicature; and have left to the idolaters nothing but their temples. Were we disposed to resent the ill usages we suffer, we should be strong enough to assert our rights sword in hand; for we have friends, not merely in one or two provinces, but in all parts of the world. And were we all to resolve to leave the Roman territory, what a loss of citizens and subjects would the government sustain! The world would be astonished at the desolation which we should thus leave behind us, and the city which you rule would then appear depopulated and dead."

III.—GENERAL PERSECUTIONS UNDER THE HEATHEN EMPERORS.

THERE are enumerated, down to the time of Constantine, ten remarkable persecutions, as having occurred under the emperors Nero, Domitian, Trajan and Adrian, Lucius Verus, Septimius Séverus, Maximin, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian. They were generally occasioned by a requisition that the Christians should sacrifice to the heathen idols, and testify their loyalty to the emperors by offering incense, and performing other ceremonies before their statues. Their refusing to do so, because conscience forbade them, was regarded as an insult to the religion of the state, and as insubordination to the government;

and it was sought to oblige them to it by force, and to make what was called their obstinacy a capital offence. The more the Christians increased, the greater was the solicitude of the heathen emperors, lest their own personal safety should ultimately be endangered by such resistance to the government; and they knew of no means for obviating the imaginary danger, but to get rid of them in every possible way. Persecutions also frequently arose, without any special command of the emperor, merely from such individual procurators of the Roman provinces as happened to be hostile to the Christians. Maximin and Decius persecuted them principally out of hatred to their own imperial predecessors, who had tolerated or favoured them. Peaceful as the Christians were, they were frequently confounded with the turbulent Jews, and had to suffer, in consequence, the most unprovoked injuries. Thus, in the reign of Adrian, a Jewish impostor, named Bar-cocab, (the son of the star,) who was afterwards called Bar-cozebi, (the son of falsehood,) stirred up, in Palestine, a rebellion against the Romans. After a long war he was conquered, and slain, together with a great number of his countrymen. Many Christians perished on this occasion, though Bar-cocab himself was a persecutor of Christianity.

No country into which our holy religion had found its way escaped the rage of persecution. The houses and possessions of the Christians were plundered; they were put to every kind of torture; and there is scarcely any method of punishment which was not practised upon them. Whole communities, with their pastors and teachers, fled into the most remote places, into wildernesses and forests: many lost their lives in a miserable manner, by hunger and thirst, by cold and sickness, by wild beasts and savages. Many Christians, who fell into the hands of their persecutors, had not sufficient courage to seal their confession with their blood, but fell away through fear or weakness; others remained stedfast in faith to the last moment of a slow and agonizing death, and surrendered their lives

with cheerfulness. Lactantius,* in the third century, writes:—"Had I the power of language a hundredfold, still I could not relate all the crimes that were committed, nor recount all the torments which the ingenuity of rulers devised against unnumbered multitudes of innocent Christians." Men and women, children and aged persons, virgins and matrons, soldiers and private individuals, of every rank and age, underwent death for Christ's sake. Some obtained the martyr's crown by scourge and fire; others were summarily despatched with the sword, having been previously stretched upon the rack. Every one had full license to injure the Christians. Some beat them with clubs, others with rods; some scourged them with thongs, others with ropes. Some were fastened to wooden machines, with their hands tied behind them, and had their limbs rent asunder. The tormentors mangled the persons of some with iron spikes; others were hung up by one hand, and had their joints dislocated; others were suspended in chains, so disposed as to cut them by the weight of their bodies in a very painful manner: and they were made to endure sufferings of this sort nearly a whole day without intermission. After they had expired, their bodies were often dragged about in the public streets. One Roman governor said, "Let no one trouble himself about these Christians; they are not worthy to be treated as men." After one martyr had endured the rack, and the hot iron plates, his judge ordered him to be smeared with honey from head to foot, and exposed to the burning sun, with his hands fastened behind him, that he might be stung to death by the flies, wasps, etc. Sometimes ten, thirty, or sixty, and once a hundred men and women, with their children, were executed in one day, by various torments. Eusebius saw, in Egypt, so many despatched in a single day, that the executioners became weary of their butcheries, and their instruments were quite blunted. Many Christians, however, suffered

* He died A.D. 325, and is called the "Christian Cicero."

with the greatest stedfastness and patience: they were even full of joy and exultation, and, with their last breath, sang praises and thanksgivings to God.

• We might fill a volume with narrations of the primitive martyrdoms; but our plan forbids it: we cannot, however, refrain from adding a few further particulars.

Simcon, bishop of the church at Jerusalem, was one hundred and twenty years old when he was brought before the Roman governor. He was scourged for several days together, but remained so stedfast as to astonish even his persecutors. Persisting to the last in his refusal to abjure allegiance to Christ, he was crucified in the year 106. Three years after this, Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was brought to Rome by command of the emperor Trajan, to suffer death for his faith in Him who was crucified. In a letter which he wrote to the church at Rome, he says:—"All the way from Syria to Rome I am fighting with wild beasts, for I travel chained to ten leopards, (soldiers,) whose rage against me increases the more I persevere in doing them good. But, let them throw me into fire, or to the lions, or nail me to a cross—let them tear all my limbs asunder;—what is this, if I can only rejoice in Christ Jesus!" On his arrival at Rome, he was exposed to the wild beasts in the theatre, for the entertainment of the people. When he heard the lions roar, he said, "I am as Christ's threshed wheat, which the teeth of wild beasts must grind before it can become bread." The lions quickly tore him to pieces, and his few bones which they left were interred at Antioch.

In the year 167, the venerable Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who had been a disciple of the apostle John, was condemned to be burned alive. He was then ninety years of age. When admonished to renounce his faith, he said, "Fourscore and six years have I been serving my Lord Christ, and he has never offended me; how can I be faithless to him who has redeemed me?" After he was bound to the stake, and had prayed fervently, the fire was kindled; yet, furious as the flames

arose, they did not touch the holy man, but seemed as if they were afraid of him. He was finally pierced with a dart, and his corpse was burned to ashes.

True Christians often pass through this world quiet and unknown to the enemies of godliness, carrying with them a treasure as in frail earthen vessels. They frequently pass unnoticed while they are here; but when they are just going, or after they are gone, then their worth becomes known. Scarcely would history have recorded the names of those choice souls who suffered at Lyons and Vienne, had they not, in their unexampled torments, shown such wonderful faith and patience. The murmur of distant thunder had for some time been threatening a tempest, which, in the year 169, broke upon the Christians in those places. The most eminent among them were seized and thrown into prison. The venerable bishop Pothinus, in his ninetyeth year, suffered so much from barbarous treatment, that he died in prison two days afterwards. Even severer sufferings awaited some other Christians, whom their enemies endeavoured to induce, by all the torments they could think of, to deny Christ.

A female slave, named Blandina, a woman of tender and delicate frame, and respecting whom, on this account, the Christians themselves felt some apprehensions lest she should not remain steadfast, was, from morning till evening, so tried by all kinds of torments, that at length the persecutors themselves became weary, and were at a loss to imagine how she could still continue alive; for her whole frame was most pitiously lacerated. But God mightily strengthened her, so that she was enabled to persist in the confession, "I am a Christian; and the evil which is spoken of the Christians is a calumny." In like manner was the deacon Sanctus most cruelly tormented; but his answer to each infliction was, "I am a Christian;" for Christ strengthened him. His tormentors were so exasperated at this, that they caused red-hot plates of iron to be fixed to the most sensitive parts of his body. But, though his whole frame was one continual sore,

and so contracted that he no longer looked like a human being, he held fast the profession of his faith without wavering. After some days, covered as he was with swollen and inflamed wounds, which could not endure the slightest touch, he was again put to the torture: but none of these things moved him; he was still supported. A special festival, for the entertainment of the people, was then appointed, to solemnize his execution. Sanctus and Maturus, the latter having but lately received baptism, were now scourged, and fixed in a red-hot iron chair; after which they were thrown, still alive and sensible, to the wild beasts. They held fast their profession; and as the wild beasts only tore, but did not kill them, they were finally put to death with the sword. Blandina was fixed to a stake, with her arms extended in the form of a cross, and thus exposed to the wild beasts to be torn in pieces; but these did her no harm, as seeming to have more compassion than her fellow-men; she was then taken away, and reserved for another occasion. Afterwards, when two other Christian worthies, Attalus and Alexander, had been roasted in the iron chair, and devoured by the wild beasts, it came to her turn to be tormented once more. She met death with joy, as if she had been at the nuptial festival of some dear friend. She was put into a net, and exposed to a wild bull, which tossed her upon his horns till she resigned her spirit. With her died a youth named Ponticus, only fifteen years of age, who evinced heroic patience. Many Christians were put to death in the same cruel manner; others sunk under their hardships in prison. In a subsequent persecution, under the emperor Severus, the successors of Pothinus and of Irenæus obtained the crown of martyrdom.

About this time several Christians were put in chains at Carthage. Among them was Perpetua, a young married woman, twenty-two years of age, whose dear babe had been torn from her breast; and with her died a female slave named Felicitas. The father of Perpetua was a pagan, and had taken all possible pains

to induce her to abandon her decision. He also visited her in prison, and said, "O my daughter, pity me in my old age. Pity your father, if you think me worthy of this name. Pity, too, your own tender infant, which cannot possibly survive you. I beseech you, relent and yield; for, if you are to die as a common criminal, the honour of my family will be ruined for ever!" He kissed her hand, threw himself at her feet, wept, and said he called her no longer his daughter, but the mistress of his fate. What magnanimity then, was requisite to withstand such heart-touching entreaties; to withstand them in the name of Him who is to be dearer to us than father or mother! Perpetua and Felicitas were exposed in the theatre to a wild cow, but received their last wounds from a gladiator.

In a persecution at Alexandria, in the year 247, an aged man, named Metras, was seized, and commanded to blaspheme. Upon his refusal, he was beaten with clubs, lacerated on the face with briars, dragged out of the city, and stoned. Immediately afterwards, a pious woman, named Quinta, was dragged into a heathen temple, and urged to idolatrous worship. Upon her refusing this with abhorrence, her persecutors bound her feet together, and dragged her through the city on the rough pavement, dashed her against millstones, and scourged her: they then brought her back to the place where she was first seized, and there put an end to her life. After this they conspired to attack the houses of the Christians. They ran into their houses, and plundered them, taking away the best of the property for themselves, and burning the remainder in the streets, so that the city appeared as if it had been sacked and plundered by an enemy. Among others, they seized an aged single woman, named Apollonia; and, having beaten out all her teeth, they kindled a fire without the walls of the city, and threatened to burn her alive, if she refused to blaspheme. She begged for a moment's respite, sprang into the fire, and was burned to death. They seized a Christian, named

Serapion, in his own house, broke his limbs, and then threw him from an upper chamber into the street. The Christians could not go out of doors with safety, day or night; everywhere the rabble were incessantly crying for their committal to the flames if they refused to blaspheme. An officer of the palace was brought before the emperor, and scourged in his presence with unusual severity. When he still refused to sacrifice to the idols, though so lacerated with scourging that his very bones were laid bare, vinegar and salt were rubbed into his wounds; and, when this did not overcome him, he was roasted to death over a slow fire. This was in the year 302.

After the bishop of the church at Rome, named Sixtus, had suffered martyrdom, in the year 260, the prefect, who had been informed that his church possessed great riches, ordered the senior deacon, Laurentius, to be brought before him, and commanded him to deliver them up. Laurentius said, "Allow me a little time to arrange every thing, and to take an inventory of all." The prefect granted him three days, for the purpose. On the third day, Laurentius having gathered about him all the poor who had been supported by the alms of the church at Rome, went with them to the prefect, and said, "Come, and behold the treasures of our God: your whole court-yard is filled with golden vessels." The prefect went out; but, when he saw only a multitude of poor people, he turned upon Laurentius a look of indignation. "What is it that displeases you?" said Laurentius; "the gold you so desire is only sordid metal of the earth, an incentive to every crime; the true gold is that heavenly Light, of which these poor people are the disciples. These are the treasures I promised you: and here are some precious stones besides; for, lo! these virgins and widows are the church's crown." "Do you banter me?" cried the prefect. "I know very well you people take a pride in your contempt of death: therefore you yourself shall not die all at once." He then ordered Laurentius to strip, then to be bound,

stretched upon a large gridiron, and broiled to death over a slow fire. When Laurentius had lain a considerable time on one side over the fire, he said to the prefect, "This side is roasted enough; now turn me." After he had been turned, he looked up to heaven, prayed for the inhabitants of Rome, and expired.

In the year 250, a merchant of Asia Minor, named Maximus, exclaimed under his tortures, "These are not pains which we endure for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; they are glorious anointings." He was then stoned.

There are also accounts upon record of very young persons patiently suffering even to death, for Christ's sake. There was a little boy at Cesarea, whose name was Cyril, who continually called on the name of Jesus, and would not be prevented, either by threats or blows, from testifying aloud his faith in Christ. Some children of his own age persecuted him; and his father himself turned him out of doors. He was brought before a Roman magistrate, who said to him, "Child, I am ready to pardon you, and to let your father take you home again, and you may by and by inherit his property, if you will only be wise, and concerned for your own interest." "But I am quite willing to suffer," said the child. "God will take me up; I am not distressed at being turned out of doors; I shall have a better home. I am not afraid to die; it will bring me to a better life." Having witnessed this good confession, he was bound, and led to the place of execution. But the magistrate had privately directed the officers to bring him back again when they had shown him the place; for he hoped that the sight of the fire would overcome his decision. Cyril, however, remained steadfast and immovable. As soon as he was brought back, the magistrate began compassionately to expostulate with him a second time. The young martyr replied, "Your fire and sword cannot hurt me; I am going to a better home: despatch me quickly, that I may get to it the sooner." The by-standers were all in tears. He noticed it, and said to them,

"You ought to be glad; and so you would be, if you knew of the city to which I am going." Thus he went



to death, and was a miracle in the eyes of all the inhabitants. This happened in the year 260.

A very young boy in Africa, whom the prefect thought to intimidate easily by threats, answered with steadfast resolution, "Do what you will; I am a Christian, and mean to continue one."

A person named Romanus was scourged at Antioch. A soldier bantered him, saying, "Your Christ is but of yesterday; the gods of the nations are much older." Romanus called a boy to him, and bade him answer the soldier. The boy courageously replied, "We children cannot now believe there are many gods; there is but one God, and he dwells in the heart." The child was then severely whipped with rods; and his mother, who stood by, exclaimed undauntedly, "Hold on, my child, and continue steadfast; soon will a crown of glory shine on your dear head!" And when the child was just expiring under the rod, the mother cried out with tears, "Farewell, my sweet and gracious child! Precious in the sight of the Lord is

the death of his saints!" May God so bless all young persons who read this, that they may be equally faithful and steadfast!

Not unfrequently, on these occasions, such scenes were witnessed as astonished the heathen themselves. Thus Eusebius, the celebrated church historian, informs us of several persons in Palestine and Phenicia whom he personally knew, whose extraordinary patience he could not but admire, when they were scourged and thrown to the wild beasts. One of them, not twenty years of age, stood with his hands stretched out, in a praying posture, before the bears and leopards; and these wholly refrained from attacking him. A bull, that was urged against him with a red-hot spike, would not push at him, but turned round upon its drivers; and the wild beasts could hardly be made to kill him.

Nearly the whole of the third century, in which the Christians were so cruelly persecuted, was a period of great trouble to the world at large. Not much fewer than fifty successive Roman emperors sat on the throne during this century, who, though they had been chosen principally by the army, were soon murdered by their own soldiers. The empire was depopulated by great and severe public calamities, which were regarded by the Christians as rebukes from God for the cruelties they had suffered, but which served only to embitter the heathen more against them. In the year 180, in the reign of Commodus, during a general persecution of the Christians, a pestilence raged in Italy, Greece, and other parts of the empire, and twenty thousand persons in Rome itself were daily carried off by it for a considerable time. A pestilence, in Ethiopia, about the year 256, was so severe, that the number of dead could not be computed. In the year 311, during the persecution under Maximian, there died in his army five thousand soldiers daily, by pestilence. Some of the emperors who persecuted the Christians were overtaken by remarkable visitations of God. Thus Valerian, having been made prisoner by Sapor, king

of Persia, was obliged to kneel down and serve as a stool to assist him in mounting his horse; and at last, by his command, was flayed alive and salted, in the year 260. The emperor Galerius, in the year 310, was seized with an incurable disease, which turned the lower part of his body to a mass of putrefaction. Physicians and idols were applied to in vain: an intolerable scent filled the palace where he abode; he was eaten of worms, and lingered a whole year in this shocking condition. His sufferings having disposed him to be more lenient, he gave command, in the year 311, that the persecution should be discontinued. Leave also was granted for rebuilding Christian churches; and he even sent a request to the Christians to pray for his recovery. Constantine soon afterwards succeeded to the empire, protected the Christians, and put an end to their persecutions, which had continued for three centuries.

We are glad to conclude, for the present, our narrative of such horrors; and more glad should we be, if we had not by and by to speak again of similar enormities.

IV.—THE CONSTITUTION AND STATE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES, AND THE PRACTICE OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

NUMEROUS and violent as were the persecutions which the church of Christ, in the second and third centuries, had to undergo, she yet enjoyed occasional intervals of rest, in which she was enabled to edify herself, and regulate her internal affairs. It was in the nature of the case, that the continually increasing number of her members caused the introduction of various arrangements that were unknown in the apostolic age; and if these did not always originate in Christian simplicity, the failure is partly to be attributed to the pressing circumstances which occasioned them. The

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constitution of the Christian churches in the apostolic age was very simple. In every larger community there was a number of elders, (*presbyters*, from which word that of *priests* is derived,) who were also called bishops, or overseers, and who were appointed to the teaching and oversight of their respective flocks, and had deacons to assist them. Over them presided only the apostles, to whom were finally referred all matters of faith and practice as long as they lived. In process of time, it became usual to denominate one of the senior elders in any church by the exclusive name of bishop, and to allow him a deciding voice in their deliberations.

The rancour of the heathen governments kept the first Christians to the observance of the apostolic rule in 1 Cor. vi., which enjoined them to decide their differences among themselves, and not before heathen judges. Thus the determination of such differences came generally to be left to the bishops; who, by those means, increased in influence and importance among the early Christians. Whether they would abuse such influence and authority depended on their personal Christian character; but there was little to fear, in this respect, at a period when the office of bishop was attended with more danger than honour. Even as late as the middle of the third century, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, says, that he did nothing without the concurrence of the whole church over which he presided.

Far greater danger began about this time to threaten the prosperity of the church, by conceding to the bishops presiding in the principal cities, as Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, and Antioch, more authority and importance than to the rest. It is true, no single bishop had as yet authority over any of the others; but what was already conceded was the first-step to those claims of precedence and domination, which the bishops of Rome, even at this early period, began to assume to themselves, and which in succeeding centuries degenerated into absolute and cruel tyranny. A

constitution, in which a cancer could form, that should by and by consume its very vitals, could no longer be regarded as sound. The claims, however, which were preferred by the bishops of Rome, Victor I. and Stephen I., in the second and third centuries, were by no means respected by the other churches; and it was not till the fourth century, under the patronage of the emperors, that they could be renewed with more success.

About this period, we find various subordinate ecclesiastical functionaries introduced. We read of subdeacons, readers, attendants, (acolythes,) exorcists, (persons who undertook to dispossess demoniacs,) and door-keepers. The complete distinction between clergy and laity, to which this multiplication of ecclesiastical offices would necessarily conduce, could not take place, so long as the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were continued; for these gifts were not confined to any one particular class. That such special and miraculous endowments did not cease with the apostolic age, is attested by credible witnesses. Thus, Justin Martyr writes to the emperor at Rome, in the former half of the second century: "Very many, who in the world at large, and even in this city, (Rome,) have been possessed of evil spirits, and could find no relief from all your soothsayers and exorcists, have been dispossessed by us Christians through the name of Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and such dispossessions still take place to the present day; for evil spirits are actually cast out of the possessed." In the latter half of this century, Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, writes: "Some do truly and certainly cast out devils in the name of Jesus; so that very often those who have been delivered from evil spirits become believers, and are admitted as members of the church. Others have the gift of knowing things to come, and of prophetic dreams and predictions. Others heal all manner of sicknesses by the laying on of hands. Yea, even dead persons have been raised to life, and have continued among us many years afterwards. Who,

indeed, can enumerate all those gracious gifts which God imparts to his church in every quarter of the world, and which are daily and freely bestowed through the name of Jesus for the deliverance of the nations!" At the end of this century, Tertullian challenges all the Roman governors of the provinces, saying, "Let any possessed person be brought before your tribunal, and you shall see with your own eyes, at the mighty word of a Christian, that very spirit which before falsely boasted himself to be a god, is obliged to allow that he is a demon." Indeed, nearly all the Christian writers in general, down to the time of Eusebius, in the former half of the fourth century, declare themselves to have been eye and ear witnesses to the fact, that Christians were very commonly in the habit of seeing the dispossession of demoniacs wrought in the name of Jesus; that others of their brethren supernaturally knew of events before they came to pass, having been apprized of them by Divine visions and revelations; that others performed miraculous cures by the laying on of hands, and this not in a secret corner, but openly before the world.

These signs of life, in the Christian church, served indeed to draw attention, and to excite reflection among the unbelieving; but they were insufficient to preserve the purity of faith and doctrine from manifold dangers. False teachers contrived to come among the flock of Christ, and then to introduce false doctrines; while the faithful pastor, however zealous, had enough to do to prevent them. It would be useless here to enumerate the deceivers of those times, without giving some account of their tenets, which would occupy too large a space in the present brief history. Such errors have had their day; but the truth still abides, and is so plainly laid before us in the word of God, that no one who seriously meditates and prays over it can long be in any uncertainty about it. When any difference upon a point of doctrine arose among Christians of those days, the decision was commonly referred to a church assembly, or council, composed of

bishops from various provinces. And indeed, so long as the greater number of church teachers abide in the true spirit of faith, and in the truth itself, such assemblies, or general councils, may prove serviceable to the welfare of the church; but when once the greater part of those who are set over it are under the influence of a spirit of unbelief and falsehood, then such a general council may become the very instrument of hell itself, as was the case with that of Constance many centuries afterwards, in the year 1415, which ordered that witness of the truth, John Huss, to be burned alive. In the second and third centuries, the church of Christ still contained faithful labourers, who took great pains to watch over the purity of its doctrine, though they were not exempt from every error. The names of Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens, Origen, and Cyprian, are well worthy to be remembered. They were pillars of the church in their day, and, in their numerous writings which have descended to us, have left valuable memorials of their zeal and Christian knowledge.

The assemblies of the early Christians for hearing the word of God, for mutual edification, prayer, praise, and the celebration of the Lord's supper, were held, in the severest times, in caves and woods, private houses and cellars; and it was not till the end of this period that buildings were erected by them for public worship. They commonly assembled on the Lord's day, in memory of Christ's resurrection; this day they had been all along in the habit of keeping holy; and even at that early period the festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide were annually solemnized, and, in some provinces, those of Christmas and the Epiphany. As early as in the second century, we find they baptized not only adults, but also the children of believing parents. They laid very great stress upon prayer and fasting. To walk in the light, as in the presence of God, was the end which was earnestly and successfully aimed at by Christians in those times. Justin Martyr testified publicly before his enemies, who could not contradict

him, "We Christians, who once served divers lusts and pleasures, now study and practise purity of morals. We, who once loved filthy lucre above everything, now distribute what we possess to every one in need. We, who once hated and would have killed one another, neither would receive strangers under our roof, because they differed from us in habits and customs, have had no scruple to live with them, ever since Christ has been manifested to us: we pray for our enemies, and seek to persuade those who hate us without a cause to live according to the glorious doctrines and precepts of Christ, that they may receive the joyful and blessed hope, and become partakers with us of the grace of God." It was a thing quite incomprehensible to the heathen among whom they lived, how they could become all at once so friendly with persons whom they had never seen before; and the exclamation was frequently heard from their enemies, "See how these Christians love one another!"

Would to God that, in the present day, the same testimony could be given of all professed Christians! How very different then would be the general appearance of society!

SECOND PERIOD.

FROM THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE TO POPE
GREGORY VII.

[A. D. 325, to A. D. 1073]

I.—EXTERNAL CONDITION OF THE CHURCHES.

THE little rivulet of the church of Christ, which began to flow from Jerusalem at the day of Pentecost, having become broader and deeper in the course of years, had distributed itself into many branches, which poured along in all directions, and some of which had increased to mighty rivers. Continuing this figurative language, we may say, that the jealous inhabitants of their borders, apprehending a general inundation, took all possible pains to prevent their further progress, and used the most violent means for the purpose; but they could not drain these rivers; and even the dikes which they raised to stem their advance proved of no service, after a man was raised up who demolished them for the express purpose of watering every parched region of the Roman empire. The streams, however, in their rapid course, had swept along much earthy matter from the shallows near their banks, and had thereby become turbid; and, after they had burst through the broken dikes, and had diffused themselves over the whole surrounding country, they became still more and more turbid, and in many a lower ground, where the water stagnated, there were formed morasses from which arose much unwholesome vapour; but still, whoever wished to quench his thirst knew where to go to the clearer streams and rivulets—nay, to the fountain itself—where the water was to be obtained pure and refreshing.

The man who broke up the dikes, and opened a way

for the rivers, as we have figuratively spokes, was the emperor Constantine.^a In the house of his imperial father, Constantius, he had already become acquainted with Christianity, but had not entered into any close connexion with it. He was, however, brought to this in a wonderful manner. The particulars are related by Eusebius to the following effect: "In an expedition against Maxentius, his rival in the empire, at the time when his whole fortune was at stake, and when he had been praying to the unknown God in great perplexity of mind, he beheld, one day at noon, a great shining light in the heavens, and in the midst of it the sign of the cross, with the inscription, 'By this conquer!' Both himself and his soldiers saw it with amazement. It is added, that in the following night he dreamed that Christ appeared to him with the cross at his side, and commanded him to assume this emblem for his banner. Constantine obeyed; and, from that time, the cross was carried as the standard of his armies. A few days afterwards, Maxentius was defeated in a decisive engagement." This was in the year 312. Without offering any remarks upon this relation, it is certain, that, from that time, Constantine became a zealous protector of the Christian church, and issued the next year a decree, that Christians should be tolerated and protected. By the year 325 he had vanquished all his enemies, and became sole master of the empire. Christianity now began to be the prevailing religion. Constantine restored to the Christians their plundered property, caused many churches to be built, introduced the general observance of the Lord's day, and employed all his abilities for the welfare of the church. He read the Scriptures diligently, held domestic worship in his palace at Constantinople, which city he had rebuilt, and exhorted his soldiers to make use of prayer. He was not baptized till a little before his death, which took place in the year 387. After his baptism, he would no longer wear the imperial purple, but continued in the white dress worn by candidates for that ordinance. His memory will never cease

from the Christian church, to which he was the first ruler to minister rest and protection.

Under his son, Constantine II., all the idol temples were shut up, and the sacrifices forbidden on pain of death. But his successor Julian was of a different mind, and attempted to restore paganism. He decreed to the idolaters the recovery of their privileges and temples, committed all public functions to them alone, and showed his contempt for the Christians in every possible way. He did not indeed expressly persecute them, for he was too politic to do so; but he gave them no protection when they were oppressed by his procurators. His hostility to Christ suggested to him the design of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem, for the purpose of falsifying the prophecy of our Lord in Luke xxi. 24. But He whom he meant to set at nought was too strong for him, and frustrated his purpose. When the workmen began to dig for the foundation of the temple, flames of fire were emitted from the ground, and prevented their work; and, after renewing their attempt several times with no more success, they were obliged entirely to desist. This emperor soon after was killed in an expedition against the Persians, having reigned less than two years. It is said, that when he had received his mortal wound, he waved towards heaven his hand streaming with blood, and cried out in the rage of despair, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered!"

His successors, to the end of the fourth century, not only protected the Christians, but even persecuted the idolaters: so strangely were things altered in a short time. The limits of Christianity were now extended in every direction, and it became fixed in Abyssinia, Persia, Armenia, and Georgia; and approached even the borders of the Goths. This branch of the Germanic tribes, which had gradually advanced from the Baltic to the shores of the Black Sea, had long been menacing the Roman territory, by predatory incursions from the Danube; indeed, nearly all the emperors in the third century, to the time of

Constantine, had severe conflicts with that people. Constantine took forty thousand Goths into military pay, and thus secured himself against their hostilities. That northern people, having now had such frequent contact with the southern nations, received some of the spiritual leaven which at this time had spread through the Roman empire; and their predatory incursions enabled them to carry back unknown treasures, which proved to be of the greatest importance to their future welfare as a people; these treasures were CAPTIVE CHRISTIANS, who communicated to their barbarous conquerors the invaluable riches of the gospel. Among them was Ulfilas, the apostle of the Germans, who invented the earliest German alphabet, and translated the Scriptures into the Gothic language. Meanwhile, other northern tribes, the Alani, Vandals, Heruli, etc., marched towards the south, and settled in the vicinity of the Goths. Thus arose the distinction between the Ostrogoths and Visigoths, or eastern and western Goths; and not long after this, about the year 370, was the first persecution of the Christians among the Ostrogoths. Their king, Hermanaric, caused a Gothic idol to be brought upon a car before the tents of those who were considered Christians, who, if they refused adoration and an offering to the idol, were burned alive in their tents. He banished the Christians to the Roman territory, where refuge was given them by the emperor Valens. Not long before this, in the year 343, a violent persecution commenced in Persia, where Christianity had become very prevalent. This persecution lasted about forty years, and is said, by contemporary writers of that period, to have destroyed sixteen thousand bishops and ecclesiastics, besides an innumerable multitude of private Christians. It was renewed several times in the two following centuries; and the fact, that with all the violence of this opposition a remnant of Christianity still continued in Persia, till it was exterminated by Mohammedanism, serves to show how extensively the gospel must have prevailed there.

The persecution of the Christians among the Visigoths was less violent than among the Ostrogoths; and Ulfilas himself lived to baptize their king Fritiger, and to see Christianity diffused among his people. More violent storms, however, arose soon after in the west, which threatened utter destruction to Christianity; but only threatened it, for in the end they contributed to its advantage. We refer to the irruptions of the northern nations, which continued for nearly two centuries, from the year 375 to 568, and gave to the whole population of Europe, and to the north coast of Africa, an entire change of manners. These irruptions, which gradually extended over the whole western empire, had issued from beyond that vast range of mountains which reaches from the Euxine to the Caspian Sea, and thence to the heart of Asia. The first inundation was of the Goths; and as the sea, when it beats upon the shore, drives one swell over another, so nation upon nation pressed after the Goths into the fairest provinces of the Roman empire, till the mighty deluge filled Europe to the utmost western border, and, swelling across the straits of Gibraltar, covered all the northern coast of Africa.

As early as the year 400, after the death of Theodosius, who had left the empire, divided into eastern and western, to his sons Arcadius and Honorius, arose Alaric, the king of the Visigoths, to take possession of fair and fruitful Italy; and no sooner was the danger averted by his defeat, than there burst from the north, under their barbarian leader Radagais, unbridled hordes of Suevi, Ostrogoths, Alani, Vandals, and Burgundi, into the Roman provinces. No armies could resist their progress, till a terror from God drove them from the Apennines, where they were enclosed by the Roman army, and perished of hunger, or were taken prisoners. The number of the latter was so great, that whole companies of them were sold into slavery, each company for a single piece of gold. But God's visitation upon Rome was protracted only for a season. Alaric, between the years 408 and 410, made three more

incursions into Italy, and in the last of these he took the city of Rome, and desolated it with fire, sword, and pillage. The Christians, however, and the Christian edifices, were spared. Meanwhile, the Sævi, Vandals, Alani, Burgundi, and other Germanic tribes, had covered France like locusts, devouring everything that came in their way. The flourishing cities on the Rhine were laid in ashes, and many thousands of Christians put to the sword. They inflicted similar cruelties upon Spain; massacred the bishops and clergy, dispersed the Christian communities, and cast lots for the conquered countries. The Suevi and Vandals took possession of Gaul, the Alani seized Portugal, and the other nations of Germanic origin settled in Spain. But soon afterwards the Visigoths founded a powerful kingdom in Gaul, and expelled the Vandals and Alani from Spain. These now retreated, under their leader Genseric, to the opposite coast of Africa, desolated with savage fury the whole length of its north-western shores as far as Carthage, and founded an extensive dominion, which soon spread over Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. The formidable appearance of Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, prevented their farther conquests, till they called to their assistance Attila, king of the Huns, in the middle of the fifth century. This latter people had come from the mountains of Caucasus, over the sea of Azof, and formed a part of that great inundation of tribes which poured down from those mountains into the countries of Europe. Their king Attila, though diminutive and mean in person, was warlike and cruel, and became the terror of all lands wherever he approached. He even called himself Godegisel, or, "God's scourge;" and was dreaded in this character by those who had no fear of God himself. At the head of an enormous host, which by the lowest computation appears to have amounted to four hundred thousand warriors, he marched up the banks of the Danube, marking his whole course with fire and blood. He crossed the Rhine near the Lake of Constance, burned those cities

on the Rhine which had been recently rebuilt, and were scarcely finished, and hastened to meet the united forces of the Romans and the Visigoths. The Roman commander Ætius and king Theodoric were encamped on the plains of Catalaunia, near Chalons. Nations of all Europe, from the estuaries of the Danube to the mouth of the Tagus, were here assembled to decide the fate of the west, by one great battle, A.D. 451. There are not many such battles of whole nations to be found in history; and it is probable that, except in the great national conflicts of Poitiers, Leipsic, and Waterloo, there has been none like it for importance and decisive consequences. There perished in it more than one hundred and sixty thousand men, among whom was Theodoric himself. Attila, though compelled to retreat behind his barricade, marched with his whole army towards Rome, devastating all the country through which he passed with fire and slaughter. Rome trembled at his approach. Only bishop Leo I. ventured to go out to him into his camp, and expostulated with him in an amicable and serious manner. By the help of God, he succeeded in moving the iron heart of this redoubted chieftain. Attila immediately wheeled about with his mighty host, departed by precipitate marches for his former station, and died on the way. His Huns buried him in a coffin of gold, no trace of which, however, could be found. After his death the Huns were no longer heard of, though they had been the terror and scourge of all Christendom in the west.

Had the inhabitants of ancient Rome, when they had been delivered from the hands of the formidable Attila, given God the glory, and seriously repented, their end might not have arrived so soon. But, in the year 476, Genseric, king of the Vandals, came against the city, and, meeting with no opposition, plundered it with his rude warriors for fourteen days together; and now all the precious works of art that still remained in ancient imperial Rome—its magnificent capital, having a roof overlaid with gold, the holy

vessels brought from the temple of Jerusalem by Titus, together with the great masterpieces of Grecian art — were broken up by the Vandals, or transported to Carthage. Such was the end of ancient Rome, which for twelve hundred years had ruled the world by its arms; and little did any one at that time imagine, that out of its ruins an ecclesiastical power was about to arise, which should last as long as the former, and exercise a yet more decided and extensive dominion.

After the British Islands, in 441, had been separated from the Roman empire, and were possessed first by the Picts and Scots, and afterwards by the Anglo-Saxons, the foundation was laid for a new empire of the west; and the many seeds of Christianity which had slumbered beneath the European soil now began to spring up, and soon showed the promise of an abundant harvest. Before the end of the fifth century, the Visigoths, Suevi, and Burgundi, in Spain and Gaul; the Franks, in northern Gaul; the Vandals, on the north coast of Africa; and the Ostrogoths, in Italy, had embraced the Christian religion: and herein they were followed, in the next century, by the Longobards, who settled upon the ruins of the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, and from whom Upper Italy is still called Lombardy. In the following centuries, the Irish, English, Scots, Bavarians, Swiss, and Frieslanders professed the Christian religion. The emperor Charlemagne, who died in the year 814, imposed Christianity upon the Saxons; it entered also, by little and little, into Thuringia and Bohemia, Denmark and Sweden, Hungary and Norway; and, at the close of the period of which we are writing, there were but few heathen tribes remaining in western Europe.

II.—MISSIONARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS PERIOD.

THE Indians of South America make use of the cassava root as a chief article of food, though in its

an]prepared state it is poisonous; for, when they have pressed out the deleterious juice, they prepare with the mealy substance a wholesome and pleasant bread. Just so an institution, which in its nature had a pernicious tendency, may, by a concurrence of circumstances, produce unexpected blessings. Such at least was the case with monasticism. Though it contained within it the seeds of manifold evil, which it afterwards developed, nevertheless, in times of oppression and distress to the church, it became a means of extending Christian knowledge in a benighted world. Both the hermit life, and the monastic life which followed it, began in Egypt. St. Anthony, who is considered the originator of the former, had heard in his youth those words of our Saviour—"Sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor;" and supposing this command to be literally obeyed, he gave away all his property, and retired to a solitude, where he spent the remainder of his life in rigid mortifications, meditation, and prayer, and attained, notwithstanding, to the advanced age of 105, A.D. 356. His manner of life gained him the reputation of a saint; many resolved to follow the same mode of living, and they were called monks or hermits. In the following century, in the time of Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, monks agreed to live together under one common roof, by fixed rules, and employ their time in a variety of spiritual and temporal occupations. Such was the origin of monasteries. The number of these increased very rapidly, especially in Egypt and Syria; and the high public estimation bestowed upon the inhabitants of a cloister, who now consisted of distinct societies of men and women, made the convent to be preferred above any other place of education; hence, also, most of the pastors and bishops were selected from the monasteries. But these societies had not then begun to bind themselves by the vow of celibacy for life; neither did this absurd restraint universally prevail till the sixth century.

In the centuries preceding, particularly in England,

France, and Germany, there were many of these reclusive societies. As the conquering Spaniards in America built a fort or castle in every newly discovered territory, to protect and extend their dominion, so did the Christian missionaries of those ancient days erect their convents in whatever part of the uncultivated world they wished to gain a footing, in order to inclose a new field of labour; and from these stations they found their way into the wildest forests, and among the most barbarous tribes. Their quiet, simple, self-denying life, their patience and meekness, and their active services of benevolence, could not fail to make a favourable impression upon those rude nations among whom they fearlessly settled; and this served as the best recommendation of that wondrous message which they desired to bring them. Many provinces of the west owed, likewise, to the monasteries, their first knowledge of agriculture, and the introduction of useful arts and manufactures, together with the circulation of the Scriptures, and many good books. And as these societies, during the northern irruptions into the Roman empire, and afterwards among the Germanic settlers, became the seminaries for Christian instruction in their own vicinities; so they were, in a great measure, the nurseries of a whole host of those messengers of peace, who went forth into other lands to disseminate the word of life. Thus the monasteries of Lerin, Luxen, and Corvey, in France; of Hy, in Ireland; of Bangor, in Wales; and of St. Gall, Hirschau, and Fulda, in Germany and Switzerland, proved means of diffusing the light of Christianity, in profession at least, over the dark forest regions of our ancestors.

A brief account of one such monastery will not be unacceptable. Erroul, the abbot of a French monastery, in the sixth century, was highly reputed for piety; but, observing that this reputation had begun to produce self-complacency within him, he retired with three companions into a remote forest, which was inhabited only by robbers and wild beasts. Here they,

settled near the source of a rivulet, where they constructed a couple of huts with mud and the branches of trees. One of the robbers soon afterwards came, and gravely assured them that their lives were in danger, that they would not be suffered to live in this domain of freebooters. Erroul replied, that they had no fear of man, who could but kill the body; that as to property they had none to lose; and that they could have no enemies, for they provoked none. He told the robber that he might become as independent as themselves, if he would give up his base profession, and become a servant of the true God; and if not, he entreated him to consider that the judgment of God awaits all workers of iniquity. The grave but meek address of the abbot made a deep impression upon the man. The next morning he returned, and brought the abbot a present of three small loaves out of his scanty stock, with a cake of wild honey; and was prevailed on to remain with them, to cultivate the ground in the wilderness, and earn an honourable subsistence by manual labour. Many others of the robbers soon followed his example; and thus gradually arose that flourishing monastery at Ouche, in Normandy, which still bears the name of this pious abbot. Fifteen other monasteries afterwards branched from this one; and, by their means, the whole neighbourhood was cultivated to a considerable extent, and transformed to a district of the Christian church. This was in the sixth century. Well would it have been for the church had these places and establishments continued as they were at first; but they soon became, for the most part, abodes of superstition and vice.

From the monasteries of England and Ireland many messengers of faith passed over to the continent of Europe.

It was from England that the gospel passed over to Ireland, and from Ireland was transported to South Germany. The chief instrument of the conversion of the Irish was Patricius, (commonly called St. Patrick,)

who was born in Scotland, about the year 372. His father was a Christian minister, and Patricius himself was a light-minded, unconverted youth till the age of sixteen, when he, with several others, was carried off to Ireland by pirates, and sold to a landholder, who kept him to tend his cattle upon the hills and in the woods. In this situation he had to suffer many hardships, from hunger and nakedness, which drove him to apply fervently to God; and hence intercourse with Him who is invisible became such a matter of necessity to Patricius, that he often called on him a hundred times a day; and rose before daylight to pray out of doors, in the snow, and frost, and rain. He had been in this state of servitude six years, when, in consequence of a dream, he departed to the distant shore, and found a vessel waiting off the coast, which conveyed him back to his own country. But after he had landed on the Scottish shore, he had still to travel over wild tracts for twenty-seven days before he could reach his home. Three years afterwards, he again fell into the hands of pirates, but remained with them only two months. As soon as he had regained his liberty, he felt himself bound in spirit to the land of his captivity, to preach the gospel there; and having had a dream that a man from Ireland brought him a number of letters, on one of which was written, "The voice of the Irish;" and having thought, as he read the letter, that he heard the call of many of the inhabitants of the forest of Focult crying aloud, "We beseech thee, come over, and live again among us!" he burst into tears, could read no more, and awoke. Nothing now could restrain him from returning, in the year 341, to Ireland, which was at that time entirely pagan. He traversed it in all directions; assembled great multitudes of people in the open plains, by the beating of a drum, according to the usage which then prevailed, and preached to them in simplicity the doctrine of the cross, which made a powerful impression on their savage hearts. He established schools in a variety of places, and made many of the natives of Erin acquainted

with the word of God. And before his death, which was not till his 121st year, he had the delight of seeing nearly all the inhabitants of the island brought to profess Christianity. Not long afterwards, in the year 516, the monastery of Bangor, in North Wales, was founded; and from this establishment those of St. Gall and Columban derived their origin, from whence the gospel of Christ was first published in the wilds of South Germany.

But before we proceed, we must notice the character of Martin, bishop of Tours. He was the son of a Roman commander; was born about the year 316, and entered the army at the age of fifteen. Though he had not yet been baptized, he was distinguished for his benevolence among his fellow-soldiers. One day, when riding into Amiens at the head of a troop of horse, in the depth of winter, as he passed under the town gate, he noticed a poor man lying, half naked, and ready to perish with cold. He immediately, with his sword, divided his cloak into two equal parts, and wrapped one of them round the frozen limbs of the poor man. As soon as he had finished his campaign, he hastened to the pious Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, and requested baptism; and this good bishop desired him to devote the rest of his life to the ministry of the church of Christ. Martin wished first to obtain the consent of his parents, and in his way home fell into the hands of robbers, one of whom drew his sword to cleave his head asunder. Martin stood undaunted, and being asked by the robber who he was, replied, "I am a Christian, and not afraid of death; but what gives me pain, is to see yourself so far from Christ." This answer so affected the robber, that he let him depart uninjured; and, arriving at home, he soon had the pleasure of seeing his mother become a believer in Jesus. But as he went about the country preaching, and testifying that Christ is the eternal Son of God, he was derided by many, and at length was scourged out of the territory. He returned to Hilary; and afterwards built a monastery in a part of

France, which remains very wild to this day; it was on the top of a steep rock, near the banks of the Loire, where about eighty young men were soon collected round him, who, by poverty and self-denial, prepared themselves for the hardships of the Christian ministry. Very many bishops and preachers shortly came forth from this seminary, and engaged in wide fields of labour, cultivating and edifying the church of Christ. Martin himself, being chosen bishop of Tours, was indefatigable in making circuits through the south of France to invite the heathen to the faith of Jesus Christ. One day he entered a village composed entirely of pagans, who all ran together to behold him. At the sight of this large assembly, his heart was so moved by their wretched condition, that he fell on his knees and prayed fervently for them. He then stood up, and earnestly and affectionately entreated them to think on their everlasting welfare. All were greatly touched by his address; and we are told that, after his prayers, a child was restored to life. Many miracles also are related of Martin; and, indeed, the accounts which have descended to us, respecting the first messengers of faith in our western part of the world, brief as they are, yet are mixed up with fabulous narratives; which shows how little the historians of those times perceived that the conversion of a soul from the power of Satan to God is a greater miracle than healing the sick, or even raising the dead. Such marvellous accounts appear to have been invented long after the times they refer to, and, in general, rest upon no good historical foundation. Still, as we are nowhere told in Scripture the precise time when miracles should cease, it would be folly and presumption to say that all miracles must necessarily have terminated with the apostolic age. Martin was removed to his rest in the year 397, in the midst of great usefulness, and bequeathed to his disciples the continuation of his labours. Among his scholars, two are particularly distinguished, Germanus and Lupus; who, in those troublous times, sowed in tears the precious

seed over the deep-ploughed furrows of Christ's field in France and England. We would gladly relate more about them, did our limits permit.

Not long afterwards, the nation of the Franks, who possessed the provinces of the Lower Rhine, began to enlarge their territory farther and farther westward, and to settle in the country, which from them retains the name of France. Their king, a young and bold warrior, named Clovis, soon succeeded in taking Soissons, the capital of Roman Gaul.

Soon after the taking of that city, Clovis married a Christian princess, who used her most zealous endeavours to persuade him to embrace Christianity. Her endeavours for a long time appeared to have been without effect, but in the hour of distress they were remembered. The Alemanni, whose barbarous hordes had encamped in the provinces of the Upper Rhine, suddenly invaded the territory of the king of Cologne, and Clovis marched precipitately to his relief. A sanguinary engagement ensued near Zulpich, in 496: the king of Cologne was wounded, his army retreated in confusion, and Clovis had begun to give up the battle as lost; but, remembering the parting words of his pious queen, who had admonished him to call upon the God of the Christians, for that by him he would overcome all his enemies, he dismounted from his horse, fell on his knees in sight of his whole army, and prayed with tears to Jesus Christ, saying, "I have supplicated to my gods, but they have no power: I now turn to Thee, and sincerely desire to believe in Thee. Deliver me from the power of my enemies, and I shall be ready to be baptized in Thy name." It is said, that from that moment the fortune of the day was changed; Clovis gained a complete victory; the Alemanni were subjugated, and a door was opened for Christianity both among them and among the Franks. Clovis, the same year, with three thousand of his soldiers, received public baptism at Rheims. His conversion was not of a spiritual kind; it was a conversion rather to the church than to Christ, and

the reproach of ambition for conquest, of pride, and of intrigue, adheres to his whole life. Churches, however, were, under his auspices, settled and spread abroad; and we know that the Lord of the church foretold that the net of the gospel would gather many of every sort, both good and bad.

The first message of the gospel came to the Alemanni of the Upper Rhine in the time of Clovis. Fridolin, a young Irishman, who had been educated at a monastery in his own country, had formed the resolution of devoting his whole life to the missionary calling. He first travelled about Ireland, from village to village, preaching the gospel. Soon afterwards he went over to France, and resided some time in a monastery, founded by Hilary, at Poitiers. But having been disquieted by a dream, in which he was bidden to go and seek out a certain islet in the Rhine, within the territory of the Alemanni, and there preach to the savage inhabitants of the Black Forest, he obtained a letter of protection from Clovis; taking it with him, he set out for the country of the Upper Rhine, and every where on his way tarried long enough to scatter the good seed to the right and left. Thus he arrived among the Rauraci, where the ancient city of Augusta (Augst) still lay in the ruins to which Attila's march had reduced it; and found, a little farther on, the islet he was seeking, where the small town of Sackingen now stands. He took up his abode in this wild place, and commenced the business of his mission. The daughter of an Alemann of rank, who lived in the neighbourhood, whose name was Wachter, was Fridolin's earliest disciple from the Alemann nation. This lady he instructed and baptized; and, as he had been presented with the whole islet by Clovis, he built a monastery there, into which pious monks from neighbouring Burgundy were gradually collected, who helped him to lay the first foundation for building up Christ's church in the Alemann provinces. After he had gone on another mission in the country of the Glarni, he returned to his islet in the Rhine, where he died, in the

year 538. Such is his history as it has reached us; but, if no other memorial of his missionary labours had been preserved than the monastery at Sackingen, it would be no more strange than our often reading of Christianity anciently planted, where we are not told who it was that planted or sowed. Thus, as early as about the year 645, we find the little town of Calw, in the gloom of the Black Forest, and in the deep and narrow vale of Nagold; and in this town, a chapel of St. Nicholas, with a little Christian community.

We return to the Alemanni, among whom Fridolin kindled the first light of Christian instruction, and to whom, fifty years afterwards, additional light was sent from distant Erin. This was the Irish preacher Columban, who had prepared himself for the ministry of the church of Christ, in the monasteries of Hy and Bangor, and was urged by an irresistible desire of carrying forth the name of the Lord into the wide world of paganism. In the year 590, he set out on his missionary pilgrimage, accompanied by twelve pious youths of his convent, who travelled with him through France into the wilderness of Alsace, where they settled in a rocky vale of Vosges, near the ruins of an ancient castle, and there erected a monastery. They lived a long while on nothing but roots and the bark of trees, till, having broken up the soil of the wilderness, their industrious hands could reap the fruit of their labour. Meanwhile, the fame of the pious Columban ran through the surrounding country. Persons of all ranks flocked to him for instruction, and for the education of their children; and a great number of heathen youths were gradually gathered into the cloister around Columban and his brethren, to become, like them, devoted to a life of poverty with Christ. Soon the asylum was found too small, and it was necessary to establish two or three settlements in the neighbourhood, for the reception of the growing numbers of new comers. A severe discipline prevailed in these monasteries, which was agreeable to the ideas of that age; but which, judging by our own feelings,

and by the standard of the gospel, was too-rigid. Yet it served to inure these devoted men to extreme self-denial and hardship, a thing quite requisite for the missionaries of those times. Columban, after twenty years' residence in his beloved monastery, was obliged to flee from the insidious designs of the wicked queen Brūnechilda; and, after a variety of circuitous wanderings, arrived with his companions once more on the banks of the Rhine. He went up the river as far as Limmat, and reached Zurich, which was then but a small castle. Finding no pagans here, he travelled with his companions up as far as Tuggen, where he found a people still sunk in heathen superstition. Columban, with his zealous disciple Gallus, stopped awhile among these people, and endeavoured to make them acquainted with the living God, and his Son Jesus Christ. But they answered, "Our ancient gods have hitherto sent to us, and to our forefathers, rain and sunshine; we will not forsake them; they govern well." Hereupon they brought an offering to their idols in the presence of their missionaries; who, in their zeal against such a contempt of the word of God, threw their idols into the lake, and set fire to their temple. The idolaters, enraged at this very improper display of zeal, treated them roughly, and banished them from the country.

Columban, with his companions, now descended from the mountainous regions, into the extensive plain near the Upper Lake of Constance, and went to the ancient castle of Arbon, where a pious priest, named Willimar, received them kindly, and lodged them. Thence, travelling farther up to Bregenz, they resolved to settle there. At this period all the neighbourhood still lay desolate from the effects of Attila's march, and only a few traces of the ancient Christian settlements were found. Within the walls of a ruinous Christian church, which had since been used by the pagans as an idol temple, the first Christian sermon was preached to the heathen Alcmanni of the neighbourhood. A small Christian village was built

on the spot, and here, from time to time, a goodly company of converted Alemanni formed a settlement. The missionaries laid out gardens, planted fruit trees, and prosecuted their fishery for food and traffic, in the Lake of Constance, with success; and what is better, they were successful as fishers of men among the Alemanni. But, after three years, Columban was obliged to flee a second time; for Brunecilda had again sent out persons to circumvent him. Accompanied by some of his disciples, he went over the High Alps into Italy, leaving Gallus behind in Willimar's hut, detained by sickness. One of Columban's companions, named Sigebert, stayed also behind on Mount St. Gothard, near the source of the Rhine, to testify to the wild Rhetians of the salvation of Christ. He founded the celebrated abbey of Disentis, in the Grison's country, from whence the light of Christianity penetrated afterwards into the deep valleys of the Rhetian Alps. Columban founded a monastic seminary, named Bobio, in the neighbourhood of Trebia, for the education of able missionaries to the heathen Longobards, and lived to enjoy the happiness of seeing their king Agiluf, with a great many of his Lombards, added to the church of Christ. In the year 616 he was called from his labours, after having, with great self-denial and mortification, consecrated forty-two years of his life to the promulgation of Christianity among the heathen of France, and the Alemanni, and Italy, and having educated a great multitude of disciples for this blessed employment.

Meanwhile, Gallus had built himself a cell on the spot where the monastery of St. Gall now stands, and proceeded to publish the gospel to the Alemanni in the vicinity. His seminary, which consisted of converted Alemanni only, soon increased so much, that he found it necessary to construct round his abode, a large number of cells for his brethren, whom he made it his principal business to train in the knowledge of the word of God. Within a short period the monastery of St. Gall became one of the principal seminaries in

Christendom, and from thence the seed of Christian knowledge was scattered over a large portion of the territories of the Alemanni. The Bishopric of Constance co-operated in the work, and, in a short time, extended itself down as far as the provinces bordering on the Neckar. Gallus, at the age of ninety-five, departed to his rest, at the dwelling of his ancient friend Willimar, in Arbon, and was interred in his cell. The only article of property he left behind was a portmanteau, the key of which he had always kept with care, so that even his most confidential disciples did not know what it contained. After his death, they found in it a hair shirt, which he wore under the rest of his clothes, and a heavy iron chain, on which marks of blood were visible. We cannot but lament that the poor man was not satisfied with bearing the burden and heat of the day, amidst great privations and severe labour, but thought it further necessary to afflict his weary body with uncommanded and painful austerities, quite foreign to the gospel. We have to thank God, that he has taught us, by brighter evangelical light, to walk in the way of gospel liberty, and to strengthen our hope of salvation, not by self-imposed inflictions of this sort, but by the sight which faith gives us of HIM who has suffered and died for our sakes.

III.—THE SPIRITUAL DECLENSION OF THE CHURCH.

BEFORE we follow further the early extension of Christianity, by tracing what we can find of its missionary history, we must renew our inquiry into the state of the ancient churches during this period, though we cannot promise, as the result of this inquiry, much that is of a pleasing kind.

While the Christian church was externally enlarging, and removing farther out her landmarks in various directions, she was enduring violent shocks within,

which threatened an entire falling away, and actually caused many breaches. The form of a church of Christ, as given in the word of God, and exemplified in the apostolic church, was soon regarded by Christians as too simple; and they devised for it all sorts of supplementary decorations. Every succeeding century added still fresh ones, till it became so overlaid with them, that only a single feature here and there could be traced of the original design; till the reformers came and washed away the most glaring of the colours daubed upon it, restoring it, in some degree, to its more ancient form. There are three particulars in which we may perceive the spiritual declension of the church at this period, (between the years 300 and 600 :) they are, the adulteration of Christian doctrine; the corrupt state of the clergy; and the general depravation of morals.

The first occasion of a general schism in the church was given by Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. This man publicly denied the Deity of Christ, and taught that he was only a creature, though made before all the rest of the world, and exalted above other holy persons on account of his peculiar piety. A great council was convened at Nice, in Bithynia, in the year 325, to decide upon this point. There were present three hundred and eighteen bishops, and many other teachers of the church, who almost unanimously rejected the doctrine of Arius, and drew up that confession of faith which is called the Nicene Creed. Arius, however, held out a long time; and, having at last subscribed to it with a distinct mental reservation of his own, he died suddenly, on the very day he was to have been restored to the community of the church, and his death was preceded by bodily sufferings of an extraordinary nature. The Arian controversy, however, did not terminate with his death. The emperor Constantius declared himself in favour of the heresy; and it had a decided ascendancy in the councils of Arles and Milan, which were held in the years 354 and 355: another proof that in vain is salvation hoped

for fire in general councils, and that truth is not always evinced by a majority of voices. This controversy occasioned much loss of life by persecution, and led to sanguinary wars. This Arian profession afterwards gained ascendancy among the Goths, Suevi, Burgundi, Longobards, and Vandals; and continued many years before it died away.

Another controversy was that against Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, who had been justly offended at the impropriety of styling the blessed virgin, Mary, *Mother of God*. This, however, occasioned him erroneously to teach, that the two natures in Christ were rather connected than united. The general council of Ephesus, in 431, condemned him as a heretic. He was deposed from his office, and died in poverty. His followers, being persecuted after his death, fled into Persia, where they had religious liberty, and formed a church of their own. Many of them travelled about Persia and Tartary, and advanced as far as the borders of China, increasing as they went the number of their adherents, by their zeal for the conversion of the heathen. Nestorian bishops were heard of in Buchara, Turkestan, and even in Thibet. But the greatest part of their acquisitions were lost to them by the overspread of Mohammedanism. Yet the Nestorians have existed in the east to this day in considerable numbers, and are called Chaldean Christians, or the Christians of St. Thomas.

Still worse was the conduct of the majority at the general council held at Ephesus, eighteen years afterwards, to try the doctrine of Eutyches, who held that Christ had not two distinct natures, but that his Divine and human natures became one single nature at his incarnation. This doctrine was at that council declared to be the orthodox one, and the better bishops were compelled by violence and weapons to subscribe to it. Hence this assembly acquired the name of the Synod of Robbers. Two years afterwards, the decision of this council of Ephesus was condemned by the general council of Chalcedon, and Eutyches was de-

clared a heretic. His numerous followers now separated themselves from the church, and found, in the sixth century, an active leader in Jacob Baradaeus, from whom they got the name of Jacobites. They spread themselves from Armenia to Egypt, and are still numerous in those countries.

Pelagius,* a monk of Wales, taught that there is no original sin in human nature; that we inherit no corruption from Adam; that natural death is the award of our own actual sins; and that every one has natural strength sufficient to enable him to will and to do good. His doctrine was condemned in several councils, but has ever found many followers, especially in the eastern church, and in France. Of similar erroneous doctrines, which sprang up within the very bosom of the church, and gained more or less acceptance, there are too many for us here to enumerate: those we have noticed may be sufficient. Indeed, there is nothing new under the sun; and many notions which are brought forward in the present day, and highly extolled by some as new light and wisdom, have existed, perhaps in the very same form, in ancient times, and died away again. But it is a mournful fact, that even true Christians in those times were often prevented, by the continual controversies they had to maintain against all sorts of errors, from finding their way into the whole system of Scripture truth without a wrong bias; and, in this hurry of controversy, some portion of the false opinions which the church had to combat adhered to several points of the orthodox creed, and became a standing part of it.

Now, when so many false doctrines were commended and cherished in the very heart of the church, it is evident that a declension must previously have taken place among the teachers themselves. And we see, from what has been related already, that many unworthy persons were found among such teachers.

* The name *Pelagius*, is the Greek for *Morgan*, "from" or "of the sea."

"While men slept, the enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat." Many circumstances concurred to introduce such a lamentable state of things.

Private individuals had become exceedingly restricted from thinking and judging for themselves; partly from the influence which their great doctors had acquired over them, and the importance attached to whatever they said and adjudged; and partly from the decisions of the general councils. Hence such private persons became afraid of searching the Scriptures for themselves, lest they should alight upon any persuasion which would be considered at variance with the church. For this reason, as well as for the sake of saving themselves trouble, many preferred simply to be led by the belief of others. After the Christian church had received patronage from the emperors, and the ministerial office was one no longer of hardship, but of honour, at least about the court and in the cities; after the churches had acquired wealth, and their ministers had begun to be dignified with the gains and caresses of the world, from that time the sacred office of the Christian ministry was sought after by many only for honour and emolument, and abuses soon so increased, that money was regarded as a key to ecclesiastical appointments. Then was the way opened for the fulfilment of that prophecy of the apostle Paul, Acts xx. 29, that "grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock." One necessary consequence of this was, that the distinction between the clergy and laity became more strongly drawn, and was kept up among the former by exterior peculiarities in dress, corporate privileges, and the like. Happy would it have been had they distinguished themselves by peculiar holiness of life, humility, and active benevolence; but in these things very many of them were deplorably deficient. Such ignorance existed among the clergy, that, at the synod of Ephesus, in 431, a bishop and a presbyter could not even write their names; and clerical immorality so prevailed, that it was found necessary to enact special laws on this

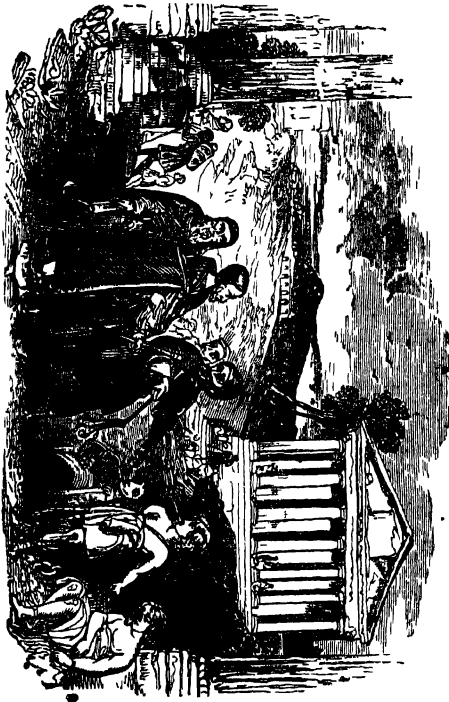
account; and the profligate bishop Cyril, of Alexandria, about the year 430, allowed murder and manslaughter to go unpunished, even when committed in his own presence. And yet the ministers of the church exacted the most humble reverence towards their persons, in bowing, kissing hands, and other observances. The sight of such corruption forced many quiet and pious persons into solitude and deserts, or induced them to retire into monasteries. But, in the eastern church, it was not uncommon for the monks themselves to disturb the peace of church and state by heading insurrections. Thus a monk, in the time of the above-mentioned Cyril, accompanied by five hundred of his order, attacked the imperial prefect in the streets of Alexandria, and dangerously wounded him by a stone which he threw at him. What the church had thus lost in spiritual life, the clergy sought to make good by every kind of outward show; and the primitive simplicity of Christian worship was gradually lost in a variety of human inventions and ordinances. Magnificent decorations of church edifices, and pomp in the celebration of Divine service, increased more and more; and ceremonies became so numerous, that even in the days of Augustine, who died A.D. 430, we find a complaint made by him, that the Levitical ritual was not so burdensome as the novel ritual of the Christian church. Wonderful virtue was attributed to the sign of the cross; the relics of saints, and afterwards their very effigies, were religiously revered; wax tapers were consecrated and a number of festivals and holidays ordained to be observed. Confidence in good works, and in human performances, as fasting, psalm-reading, almsgiving, beneficence to churches and monasteries, etc., increased more and more; and when Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome, had adopted the heathenish fgment of purgatorial fire, a foundation was laid for the abominable sale of indulgences, which, in subsequent centuries, wrought such havoc in the church.

Meanwhile, the claims preferred by the bishops of

Rome, to supremacy over all other teachers of the church, were urged more boldly than ever. It is true, the bishops of Constantinople, of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, disputed it with them; and when the Roman bishop assumed exclusively the title of Pope, (papa, or supreme father,) they likewise assumed the title of Patriarch. But many circumstances, especially that of the emperors residing for a long period at Rome, and their honouring its bishops with many privileges and distinctions, conduced to the final and triumphal ascendancy of the latter; so that other churches of Christendom, with the exception of the Greek church, learned gradually to regard the pope as the supreme bishop, and all his decrees and ordinances as valid and binding. This, however, was much resisted for a time in many places, especially in England, where a great number of clergy, for refusing thus to acknowledge the Roman pontiff, were murdered by priests of his party; and in Scotland, where the Culdees (or monks of that country, who were so called, *à colendo Deo*) refused submission to the Romish yoke till the twelfth century.

Yet there were, even at that period, many bishops of Rome, whose personal character was estimable. We have already noticed Leo, who lived in the middle of the fifth century, and who courageously went out to meet the savage Attila, and to expostulate with him. Gregory the Great, already mentioned, was likewise in many respects an upright, pious, and zealous man; though not free from monkish superstitions and ambitious designs. Though he was of a very infirm constitution, he was indefatigable in his labours, and was very anxious for the spread of the gospel among the heathen. As he was passing one day through the streets in Rome, he saw in the marketplace several fine youths exposed to sale as slaves. They had been brought from the remote island of Britain. Gregory inquired whether the inhabitants were heathens or Christians. "They are still in heathen darkness," was the reply. The pious monk,

GREGORY AND THE BRITISH YOUTHS AT ROME.



rejoined, "Alas that the prince of darkness should have such fine countenances in his dominion, and that such noble features should be estranged from the everlasting grace of God! What is the name of their people?" "They are called the Angli," was the answer. "Indeed," he exclaimed, "they have angelic faces, and it is a thousand pities that they are not partakers of the glory that shall be revealed before the angels of God. What is the name of their province?" "Deira," it was answered. "Yes, indeed," he said, "De ira; from the displeasure of God they must be rescued, and called to the grace of Christ. What is the name of their king?" "Ella," they said. "Oh that he may soon sing Alleluiah!" exclaimed Gregory, with great emotion. From that moment he felt an earnest desire to spread Christianity among the Saxons in Britain, and he never lost sight of this object.

We are the more desirous to give an account of some other distinguished worthies of this period, because they, and several like them, were the persons by whose labours the church was preserved from entire declension.

Ambrose, who had been a captain in the army, was chosen to the bishopric of Milan, even before he had been baptized; and after strongly refusing that office, was obliged to accept it. He gave away his property to the poor, and searched the Scriptures with the greatest zeal, day and night. His house was open to all, that any might bring their difficulties to him without restraint. Whatever money he could spare, or save, he expended in redeeming Christian slaves, and to this purpose he devoted even the silver and gold utensils of his church. But, tender-hearted as he was, he was no less firm and spirited in every case which required his public interference. When seven thousand persons were massacred at Thessalonica, by order of the emperor Theodosius, in revenge for the death of some of his officers who had been murdered by the people of that city, though he had promised Ambrose that he would spare them, the latter wrote to the monarch a

serious reproof, in which he pronounced him excommunicated, till he should openly express his repentance. When the emperor, notwithstanding, was entering the church, Ambrose placed himself at the door, and forbade his entrance. The emperor took eight months to consider the matter, but, at length, complied, and consented to do public penance. He put off his imperial mantle, fell on his face, and prayed, in the words of the 119th Psalm, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word." The people wept, and united in prayer with the emperor. This was near the end of the fourth century.

Jerome, another eminent father, lived a considerable time as an hermit in the deserts of Syria, and was a great friend and promoter of monasticism. He spent the last twenty-five years of his life in a convent at Bethlehem, in Palestine, where he employed himself chiefly in writing annotations on the Scriptures, and composed many useful treatises, till his death, in 420. But his most important work was his translation of the Bible into Latin. This version was almost the only source of Scripture knowledge to the Christians of the west, from the fifth to the sixteenth century; for Greek and Hebrew were then nearly lost to this quarter of the world, and there were but few versions of the Bible in the western languages. Many thousand manuscript copies of Jerome's Latin Bible were made in Europe, by pious monks in their lonely cells, and their circulation served to instruct and edify many in those dark ages. Thus did a light once more emanate from little Bethlehem, the brightness of which illumined the countries of this part of the world, or at least individuals inhabiting them, during the gloom of a thousand years.

John Chrysostom, (or Golden-tongue, so called on account of his rich eloquence,) was bishop of Constantinople in the year 398, and preached the gospel boldly, without respect of persons, in that great and luxurious city. The number of his hearers sometimes amounted to ten thousand. His honest plainness

having given offence to persons of corrupt minds, they contrived to get him banished into Armenia. He underwent great hardships by ill-treatment on his way; and his debilitated constitution was quite broken in that rude country. But, amidst all his tribulations, he preached the word of God indefatigably; sent missionaries to the heathen; distributed bread to the needy; and redeemed captives from the hands of robbers that infested the neighbourhood. Even this usefulness was envied and disallowed him; and, being dragged to another place of banishment, he died on the way, through the hardships of the journey. His last words were the language of his whole life: "Praised be God for all!" So truly has it been proved, by experience in every age, that, whoever will be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, must take up his cross and follow him.

Of this truth we have another instance, in the case of Athanasius, archbishop of Alexandria, who defended with great firmness the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ against the Arian heresy. Five times was he banished by the heretical party; he suffered in exile perpetual jeopardy of life, and was kept in this state about twenty years. In the year 335, he was cited before a synod at Tyre, where many horrible and false charges were brought against him; and, among the rest, that he had murdered the bishop Arsenius: a box, containing a human hand preserved in salt, which was alleged to be the hand of Arsenius, was produced in the court, and Athanasius was accused of having carried this about with him for purposes of sorcery. The assembly was horror-struck, and his enemies triumphed; while Athanasius, calm and composed, asked his judges if they had known Arsenius personally; to which some answered in the affirmative. Athanasius then opened the door, let the very man into the room, and said, "Is this the person whom I murdered, and whose hand I cut off?" So saying, he drew aside the man's cloak, and showed both his hands. The accusers were confounded; for,

this was A. Menius himself, who, by a wonderful providence, had arrived just at that time in Tyre. Athanasius, however, was condemned on other false charges, and obliged to go into banishment to Treves, on the Rhine. He afterwards returned to Alexandria; but another persecution soon breaking out, he was suddenly attacked by night in the church, in the midst of his congregation, and with great difficulty made his escape. He fled into the Egyptian wilderness, to the hermit Anthony, where he lived six years, and died in 372, shortly after he had been permitted to return to his church and people.

Aurelius Augustinus (commonly called St. Augustine) was born in 354. He was blessed with a pious mother, whose name was Monica, who prayed most fervently and perseveringly for the conversion of her unpromising son; for, though he was a diligent student, he was very licentious. Ambrose, the celebrated bishop of Milan, whose prayers she had requested for him, comforted her in her distress, with these words: "Be of good courage; a child of so many prayers and tears can never be lost." Augustine had left Africa, his native country, and had come to Milan; where the venerable Ambrose met with him, and exhorted him to read more diligently the word of God. Upon one occasion his mind was much impressed with an account he heard of the conversion of several Roman persons of rank, and he said with emotion to a friend, "These persons take the kingdom of heaven by force, while we, with all our learning, are wallowing in sin." He hastened into the garden, fell on his knees under a fig-tree, like Nathanael, and prayed fervently with many tears for converting grace. While he thus cried to God, he thought he heard repeatedly, from a neighbouring court, the words, *Tolle, lege!* "Take up, and read!" Considering these words as an admonition from heaven to read the Scriptures, he opened St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where the first words that met his eye were the 13th and 14th verses of the 13th chapter: "Not in rioting and drunkenness,

not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." The passage deeply affected him; and from that moment he resolved to give up his life to the Lord Jesus. He hastened to his mother, to communicate to her the joyful news, that he too had found mercy. It is easy to imagine how great must have been the joy, and how fervent the gratitude of the pious Monica. Augustine returned to Africa; applied himself to the ministry; and finally became bishop of Hippo in that country, where he died just at the time when the Vandals were besieging the place, in the year 430. He was not free from every error of his times, any more than the other eminent men already noticed; but the free grace of God in Christ was his favourite subject, and his writings which have descended to us contain a treasure of Christian wisdom and experience, such as might be expected of one who is justly regarded as the most useful Christian teacher of his age.

Though we could speak of many other faithful servants of Christ who lived in those times, and whose names are written in heaven, yet the number of those who were unfaithful in their office was much greater; which would naturally contribute to increase immorality and ungodliness more and more among professed Christians. As early as the fourth century, the grossest vices among professed Christians made it necessary for whole synods to be occupied in enacting preventive punishments. But the corruption of Christianity, in all ranks, became grosser still in the fifth century. The courts of Christian princes were then overrun, as in the days of paganism, with ambition, profligacy, violence, and intrigue, restless desire of conquest, and every other kind of enormity. Heathenish customs and superstitions, with all possible sins, were widely spread among the mass of the people. Sundays and fast days were abused to every purpose of dissipation, and all assemblage for religious worship was neglected. The greater part of those who were called Christians

had little more than the name; instead of seriously repenting of their sins and vicious lives, they deemed it sufficient to distribute alms, or to perform what were esteemed good works, while their hearts remained unchanged. This general corruption had more especially pervaded the whole eastern church, and therefore we need not wonder that God had secretly been preparing for it a severe scourge, which for centuries sorely chastised the licentiousness and indolence of the Christian world.

IV.—THE MOHAMMEDAN DARKNESS.

AT the city of Mecca, in Arabia, near the shores of the Red Sea, was born in the year 570, the man who was to become a more terrible scourge to the degenerate church of Christ than any of its former persecutors. Every past persecution had wrought more good than harm to the cause of Christianity, as was evident from the result; but the violent overspreading of Mohammedanism was evidently a punishment from the just judgment of God; for the calls to repentance and reformation which God hereby addressed to the Christian church were not attended to.

Mohammed was originally a merchant, who travelled to neighbouring countries for the purpose of traffic; and thus became acquainted with the religious peculiarities of Jews and Christians. Being of a nation descended from Ishmael, the son of Abraham, he easily found, both in Judaism and Christianity, many materials for his own new doctrine. He taught, that as there is but one God, so Mohammed was his greatest prophet, greater than Moses and Christ; that every thing which comes to pass is fore-appointed by an inevitable fate; that, after death, good is rewarded and evil punished. Frequent prayer at certain fixed hours, beneficence to the poor, circumcision, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, and abstinence from wine, are the

chief rules of his religion. On the other hand, he allowed polygamy, made divorces easy, and represented the future state as a perpetual enjoyment of sensual pleasures: hence it is not surprising that he found so many followers. In the fortieth year of his age, after having come forward with the assertion, that the angel Gabriel had appeared to him, and had revealed all this to him, he gained over a number of his countrymen, whom he confirmed in the persuasion that his doctrine was from God, by relating to them many pretended miracles of his own, and by appearing to work others equally pretended. Nevertheless, he met with much opposition, and being expelled from Mecca, in the year 622, he fled to Medina. From this period the Mohammedans date their era, which they call the Hegira, that is, "the flight" of their prophet. At Medina, the number of his followers so increased, that, in 630, he led ten thousand men to Mecca, and took the city; after which he required all kings and emperors, by special embassies which he sent to them, to acknowledge him as the apostle and prophet of God, and resolved to propagate his religion by the sword. But before he could proceed any farther, he died, at the age of 63, in the year 632.

After his death, his doctrines were collected into a volume, which is called the Koran, (or, "reading,") and which is regarded by his followers as their sacred code. It is full of improbable and foolish tales, mixed up with some particulars taken from the Bible, principally relating to the patriarchs. His successors, the caliphs, conquered in a few years all Syria, Palestine, with Jerusalem, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Asia Minor. Whoever resisted them, was put to the sword; temples and cities were destroyed, and Mohammed's doctrines imposed on the oppressed inhabitants. We could wish that what is told were overstated; namely, that in the short space of twelve years, after his death, thirty-six thousand towns and castles were taken by the Arabians, and four thousand Christian churches destroyed; but it is quite certain, that

their victorious marches must have been like the flight of locusts, and that the devastations they occasioned must have resembled the calamities wrought by these devouring insects. The whole coast of North Africa, which was covered with a large number of Christian churches, became their prey; and on that coast they so entirely subverted Christianity, that not a trace of it was to be found. Only in Egypt the Coptic Christians maintained their footing, as did the Nestorians in Persia, and a few smaller Christian communities elsewhere; but they lived under severe oppression, which gradually reduced them to a very low and deplorable state.

The Arabs quarrelled among themselves about the choice of their caliphs; and this quarrel made demands on their attention and strength for about thirty years, which gave the Christians a little respite. By these contentions, the Mohammedans became divided into two parties, called Shiites and Sunnites. The former, who are chiefly found in Persia, regard the Koran alone as their book of religion; but the latter receive also the traditions of the first four caliphs. It was not till the year 668 that they renewed their attacks upon other countries, and besieged Constantinople for seven years; but they were forced, by a powerful means of defence called Greek fire, to withdraw their troops. At the beginning of the next century, having pursued their victorious march along the north coast of Africa, to the very shores of the Atlantic, they were able to cross the Straits of Gibraltar, and to pour into Spain; they purposed to traverse the length of Europe, and to attack Constantinople on the land side. The king of the Visigoths, to whom Spain was then subject, lost his life in a long and bloody battle with them, and the Arabs now marched, without opposition, through Spain, crossed the Pyrenees, and reached Lyons and Besançon: and as, three centuries before, the western church had been threatened with ruin by the deluge of the Huns from the east, so was she now reduced to most imminent danger by this raging torrent of Arabians

from the west. France and Germany trembled. But a six days' conflict ensued near Poitiers, which was no less decisive for the very existence of the Christian church than the great national battle which took place at that period on the plains of Chalons. In this battle the bold leader of the Franks, Charles Martel, after mighty exertions, totally defeated the Arabs, in October, 732, and drove them back into Spain, the limits of which they never afterwards attempted to pass.

Fearful was the havoc which the Christian church suffered in the course of this century. Hundreds of thousands of Christians were slain in the barbarous conflict, thousands of their churches were laid in ruins, and large numbers of them yielded to the imposture of the false prophet, through fear of the Arabian sword. The eastern church, at the end of this period, was quite in the condition described by the prophet Isaiah, chap. i. 7—9: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

V.—CONTINUATION OF MISSIONARY EXERTIONS.

WE turn back to Germany, in order to become acquainted with a few more of those messengers of faith, who scattered the good seed over regions which were then so barbarous. In the middle of the seventh century, Emmeran, Amand, and Rupert had preached the gospel in the provinces of the Danube, where the fields of an earlier Christian plantation had long been trodden down by the desolating marches of the emigrating nations; and, shortly after the time of those preachers,

the word of God advanced into the heathen country of Thuringia. In the year 685, an Irish monk, named Kilian, or Kullen, had settled in Wurzburg, where the heathen duke of Thuringia, whose name was Godsbert, then resided. The Thuringians commonly worshipped the Germanic idols Woden, (Odin,) Thor, and Freya, and had their own peculiar gods besides, named Holla and Pusterich. The last was a rude image of brass, three feet high. The image was hollow, and contained nine measures of water. Two round apertures represented his hideous mouth. This statue was filled with water at certain festivals in honour of the idol; the apertures were closely stopped with plugs; and the image was then set over a fire, for the water to boil. The expansion of the water in boiling driving out the plugs with a tremendous report, the hot element spouted plentifully into the faces of the deluded multitude. Such were the gods which were formerly worshipped, and which we should be worshipping at this day, like the heathens of India, had not God been graciously pleased to send us his precious gospel.

Kilian preached successfully in all the provinces of the Maine, and duke Godsbert himself was the first to receive baptism. Many of his court, and nearly all the eastern portion of the Franks, soon followed his example. But it was the will of God that Kilian should meet with the same fate as John the Baptist. The duke, like Herod, had taken Geilane, his brother's wife, to be his consort. Kilian prudently waited till the duke's confidence in him was established, and then represented to him that this connexion was sinful, and must be dissolved. The duke promised to comply, but postponed it till his return from an expedition, which he was obliged then to undertake. During his absence, Geilane caused the missionary, with his assistants, to be imprisoned and beheaded in prison, in 688. These servants of Christ were immured in a close stable in their clerical attire, with a book of the gospel and a pen in their hands. The murderer and the

contrivers of the murder are said to have come to a horrible end by the righteous visitation of God, which they could not escape; and the remembrance of the venerable martyr was solemnized for centuries among the people to whom he was the first to bring the glad message of salvation.

About the same period, attempts were made by Omer, Landebert, and Hubert, to break up the ancient fallow grounds of heathen superstition in Brabant and Flanders; and a little band of twelve servants of Christ set out from England, to carry the message of salvation to the people of Friesland. Several of them were of royal ancestry, and their leader's name was Willibrod. They came to Utrecht about the year 690, but they found the Frieslanders unwilling to exchange idolatry for Christianity, and their king Radbod not only no protector, but their enemy. Neither were the Saxons who inhabited the right bank of the Rhine, more friendly to the missionaries, but murdered two of them, the brethren Ewald, in a tumult. A third, named Suidbert, carried the gospel into the wild country of Berg, and built a monastery. Willibrod himself, after many adversities and disappointments, established himself in Friesland, with such success, that even king Radbod resolved to receive baptism. He was already standing with one foot in the water to be baptized, when he said to the bishop, "What think you, teacher, of my forefathers? Do you suppose the greater number of them to be in paradise, or in the nether world?" The bishop replied, that he must suppose most of them to be in the nether world. Upon which Radbod said, "Then I think it better that I should go where the greatest number of them reside;" and so saying, he drew his foot out of the water, and determined never to be a Christian. He died soon after, and under such circumstances, that his speedy death was generally regarded as a special judgment of God upon him. New Christian communities were formed in different parts of the country; churches were built, idol groves were destroyed, and the

Christian teachers enjoyed full liberty to publish the gospel.

Willibrod, at length, saw the fruit of his thirty years' labour, and had the joy of being assisted for three years by his relative Winfried, whom compassion for the heathen had brought from England to labour among his German brethren. Gladly would Willibrod have detained him still, but Winfried had thought of the heathen in Hesse and Thuringia, and nothing could withhold him from going to them. He set out on his journey in the year 722, and lodged one night in a monastery near Treves, where a boy of fifteen, who had just returned from school, was required at breakfast to read to him a portion of the Latin Bible. When he had finished, Winfried said to him, "My boy, you can read very well; but do you understand what you have read?" The boy began to read the passage over again. "That is not what I mean," said Winfried; "I want to know whether you can tell me, in your own words, what you have been reading?" The boy acknowledged he could not. Winfried then explained to him the passage, and gave an impressive address upon it to the company present. His words so touched the boy's heart, that he immediately told the abbess, his aunt, he wished to go with this man, to learn from him the meaning of the Holy Scriptures. No representations could alter his resolution; but he said to the abbess, "If you will not give me a horse to ride with him, I will follow him on foot." The abbess saw that something more than human affected the heart of the youth, and she permitted him to go. The name of this youth was Gregory; and he afterwards became one of the most distinguished instruments in spreading the gospel through the north of Germany.

Winfried first stopped at Amoneburg, in Hesse, preached with power, and was so successful, that the inhabitants became well disposed towards Christianity, and erected several wooden chapels. He then preached zealously up and down the country among the idolaters, showing them, by word and deed, the impotency

of their miserable idols. Near Geismar, in Lower Hesse, he came to a huge oak, which was esteemed the dwelling of the principal deity, and revered as most sacred. Winfried lost no time in felling the oak with his own hands. A multitude of the idolaters stood by as spectators, astonished at his boldness, and looking for nothing less than fire to descend from heaven to consume the sacrilegious offender. But Winfried did not stop till the oak, with a mighty crash, was brought to the ground, and shattered to pieces. When the pagans thus perceived that even the greatest of their gods was not able to resent such an insult, many of them resolved to receive baptism; and, at their earnest desire, Winfried built a church of the wood of that same oak, on the spot where it fell.

Many similar exploits are related of Winfried; how he overthrew and destroyed the large ancient idols of Hesse and Thuringia, and built churches and chapels where they had stood. He and his fellow-labourers preached with great power wherever they went; and such large multitudes ran from all parts to hear him, that he was often obliged to address them in the fields. The number of churches and villages which he founded in Thuringia was very considerable; and he speaks of one hundred thousand pagans of that country having become converted to Christ. His example stirred up the numerous monasteries of England, and brought him many valuable assistants from that country. Even pious ladies crossed the sea to become teachers of Christianity to their own sex in Germany. Thus Chunitrude taught in Bavaria; Thekla, at Kitzingen and Ochsenfurt; Lioba, a near relative of Winfried, at Bischofsheim, near Wurzburg; and her sister Waldburgis, at Heidenheim, in Thuringia, where she laboured successfully, under the Divine blessing, for twenty-five years among her own sex. Winfried's unwearied activity even extended to Bavaria and the East Franks; he founded churches, bishoprics, and monasteries; revived ecclesiastical discipline wherever he found it decayed; displaced unworthy clergymen,

and introduced order wherever he came. It is, however, painful to reflect, that he proceeded on the principle, that the church in Germany ought to be subject to that of Rome, and therefore to the pope; and that having given a solemn promise to the pope that he would labour to that effect, he brought Germany under the influence and dominion of the papacy. Winfried was several times at Rome, and received from the pope the name of Bonifacius, (a doer of good,) and the dignity of archbishop, of which he made no use till he was chosen archbishop of Mayence. But on every occasion he availed himself of the plenary authority given him to appoint bishops, and found churches and monasteries; and thus he provided that his work might not cease at his death, and that there might be no want of seminaries for raising up fit persons to succeed him in it.

One of his scholars, named Sturm, of a distinguished family in Bavaria, desiring to found a monastery in one of the large forests which still existed in Germany, sailed, with Winfried's consent, up the Fulda, taking some companions with him, to look out for a suitable spot in the solitary wilderness; but they were obliged to return without accomplishing their purpose. Sturm, however, went again by himself, riding upon an ass, through the wildest regions, chanting psalms on his way, and praying inwardly. When night overtook him, he rested under a tree, after he had cut some wood for a fence to protect his poor beast from the savage animals that infested the forest. Once he was met by a company of wild Slavonians, who were going naked to the stream to bathe, and who surrounded him with an insulting shout. "Where are you going?" they demanded. "Further into the forest," was his reply, and he was suffered to pursue his lonely way. At length he reached a most retired spot near the Fulda, where solitude itself might well seem fearful, but which he thought most convenient for his purpose. Winfried himself came afterwards thither with a number of his scholars. They went first to an adjoining

hill in the midst of the forest, and there prayed to God for a blessing on their undertaking. They then went cheerfully to work, and thus commenced the celebrated monastery of Fulda, in the year 774, in which some of the most distinguished teachers of the German church were afterwards educated.

Winfried anointed Pepin at his coronation as king of the Franks, and after that he had only one more wish remaining, which was to close his missionary course in Friesland, where he had begun it forty-eight years before. Willibrod, after fifty years hard missionary labours in that country, had gone to his rest in 746, and had left behind him a great number of pious disciples; but his plantations required the care and oversight of a wise and experienced husbandman like Winfried. This venerable labourer was already in his seventy-fifth year, when he set out on his last mission to Friesland. He travelled through the country with all the courage and spirit of youth, transformed idol groves into churches, set up what was fallen down, arranged what was in disorder, and baptized thousands of men, women, and children. On a festival day, when he had invited all the baptized Frieslanders to a general assembly in the open field for worship, he was at an early hour on the ground expecting their arrival. But, instead of them, large companies of pagans made their appearance, armed with spears and shields, who had conspired to murder on this day the enemy of their gods. Winfried's attendants wished to defend him against the fury of these idolaters, but he forbade all resistance, and turning to his brother elders and deacons, he said, "Brethren, be of good courage, and fear not them that can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rejoice in the Lord. Cast upon him the anchor of your hope, and meet with steadfastness the brief moment of death, that you may reign with Christ for ever." He had no sooner spoken than the idolaters fell upon the unarmed little party, and murdered them with their spears. Thus died Winfried, on the 5th of June, 755, for the sake of Him whom he had

served for half a century in hunger and nakedness, in perils of robbers and murderers, in watchings and fastings, with many tears and temptations. He was called the apostle of the Germans, because no one had laboured so zealously, to such an extent, and with such success, in the conversion of the Germanic nation. •

After the death of Winfried, his former pupil Gregory, already noticed, became abbot of the monastery of Utrecht, where he was labouring at the time of his teacher's death. Here he educated a great many pious scholars from France, England, Friesland, Thuringia, and Saxony, to labour as messengers of salvation in the north of Europe. He was much beloved by his pupils, and as the hour of his death approached, they stood in tears about him, and whispered to one another, "He will not die to-day." The venerable man, in his seventieth year, rallied all his remaining strength, blessed them, and said, "You must take leave of me, and let me go to-day." He then bade them carry him into the church before the altar, where he prayed on his knees, received the Lord's supper, and expired. •

We have intentionally dwelt at some length on the memory of these servants of Christ; for they are almost the only true Christians of that dark period of whom we have any account handed down to us; and the history of the Christian church loses its chief value and interest when it ceases to notice real Christians. That they lived in many errors, and had many defects, is not to be denied; the ignorance of those times might lead us to expect it; but they did not wrap their few talents in a napkin, or hide them in the earth.

Hitherto the heathen Germans had been left at liberty, to allow or not allow the preaching of Christ among them; but when Charlemagne, king of the Franks, who now wore the diadem of the Cesars, and whose dominions comprised a large portion of Europe, had concluded a thirty years' war with the rude pagan Saxons, he compelled many of them to receive Christianity, and thus set a bad precedent, which so many other princes afterwards adopted. Charlemagne.

nowever, did much for the revival of letters, for the amendment of ecclesiastical discipline, and the reformation of the clergy; but Christianity was now become, and increasingly became, so corrupted, that it might more properly be called paganism with a Christian name. Barbarous nations merely exchanged the idols of their ancestors for the images of Christian saints, learned to use the sign of the cross, to kneel and utter a pater-noster, that is, the Lord's prayer in Latin, without understanding the words; and entire provinces might often be seen receiving baptism in a single year, and a few years afterwards renouncing Christianity. For inveterate habits are not easily changed for new usages, the meaning of which is not understood, and the force of which remains unfelt. But some estimable persons still were found, who consecrated their whole ability to the ministry of the church, and laboured with real piety for the conversion of the heathen; as Willehad, in Bremen and Saxony; Liudger, in Westphalia; Anschar, in Denmark and Sweden; Rembert, in Brandenburg: but whether they laid too great a stress on the mere ceremony of baptism, or whether they thought it worth all their labour to implant the mere rudiments of Christianity in the minds of any people, one thing is clear, that the greater part of what are called conversions at the close of this period were not deserving of the name. The external profession of the new converts seldom proceeded from inward conviction and correct instruction; seldom was it found united with any real change of mind and practical Christianity. Motives of temporal advantage, the example of the emperors, kings, and princes who had received the Christian religion, or the fear of their authority, had often more effect in deciding them to receive baptism than any spiritual conviction of faith in Christ. We will give one example out of many. Harold, king of Denmark, having been baptized in the year 825, together with his whole family and a large retinue, at Ingelheim on the Rhine, where the emperor Lewis resided, had received munificent presents from the

emperor upon the occasion. From that time it became a custom for a number of Danes to go yearly, at Easter, to the imperial court to receive baptism, together with valuable presents of vestments and arms. On one of these occasions so many of them came to be baptized, that a sufficient number of white dresses had not been got ready for the candidates to wear, according to the ancient custom. The emperor ordered the deficiency to be supplied with linen frocks made up hastily from the vestments of the clergy. One Dane, of high rank, having been baptized in such a frock, on coming up out of the water, said, in a great passion, "Well, I have been here twenty times before, and have always had the best dress of candidates put upon me; a rag of cloth like this is unbecoming a soldier, it is only fit for a swineherd." Nevertheless, Christianity, such as it was, became thus diffused throughout Bohemia and Moravia, and in Hungary, Poland, and Russia; and though it was in this defective state, we may remember that, wherever it came, it superseded many heathen abominations, and laid the first foundation of civil order, education, and refinement.

VI.—FURTHER DECLENSION OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

WE are the less surprised at finding the extended plantations of Christianity in heathen countries in the sad condition above described, when we turn our attention to the central establishments of more ancient date, and find how they were overrun with barbarous innovations. The torrent of corruption had flowed deeper and deeper into them from one century to another, and cardinal Bellarmine himself acknowledges, that "there never was a more untoward and disastrous period than this, when temporal rulers were ungodly, and the popes were not remarkable for piety." Baronius, another cardinal, who lived subsequently to the

Reformation, says of the tenth century, that "it may well be called the *iron* age, for its obduracy and barrenness of every thing good; the *leaden* age, for the scum of its predominant monstrous wickedness; and the *dark* age, for its want of learning." In the very midst of the temple might then be seen the abomination of desolation. All that the church had suffered under the pagan emperors, or from heretical teachers and other persecutors, appears little beyond child's play as compared with these times. How shamefully did every thing look in the Roman church, when in Rome itself lewd women were the governors, when episcopal sees were filled up according to the pleasure of such women, and, which is shocking to relate, the partakers of their abominations were promoted to "the chair of St. Peter!"

Still the power and importance of the bishops of Rome continually increased. As the pretended successors of the apostle St. Peter, to whom the Lord had given the promise, in Matt. xvi. 18, 19, they claimed the precedency of all Christian bishops, and the right of final decision upon all affairs of the church. Accordingly, pope Boniface III., in the year 607, obtained from the emperor Phocas the title of universal bishop, and caused his church to be styled the head of all churches. Pope Constantine I. allowed persons to kiss his slipper in the presence of the emperor Justinian; and, in the earlier half of the eighth century, the controversy about image worship gave the Roman pontiffs occasion to excommunicate the feeble Greek emperors, and to effect the total revolt of Rome from their dominion. Besides this, Pepin and Charlemagne, the kings of the Franks, assigned to the bishop of Rome a considerable territory around that city; and thus the popes became temporal princes, in plain opposition to the command of our blessed Lord and Master, Luke xxii. 25, 26. Their pretensions to secular power were consummated by pope Gregory VII., of whom we shall speak in the next section; and, if it be true, that the fallen church could only have been kept together by

such means, it is but another proof of the indescribable corruption to which that church must have been reduced. There is a Latin proverb, *Qualis rex, talis grex*—"As is the shepherd, so are the sheep." If degeneracy and disorder thus prevailed among the rulers of the church, nothing better could be expected of the inferior clergy. Very frequently were bishoprics and other lucrative ecclesiastical offices sold for money, and regarded only as desirable sources of wealth. The clergy were generally so ignorant, that they could scarcely repeat by heart their Latin prayers; and many of them could not even read. Some of the bishops themselves made no scruple of accompanying armed expeditions, and of engaging in plunder and murder. Gerold, bishop of Mentz, marched into the field with the duke of the Franks against the Saxons, and lost his life in single combat. The duke made his son Gewilieb bishop. In another expedition, which was joined by Gewilieb, this bishop sent his servant into the Saxon camp to search after the murderer of his father. The servant found the Saxon knight, and invited him to an amicable conference with his master the bishop. The Saxon, suspecting nothing, rode on his charger into the Weser, when Gewilieb rode into the river to meet him, and suddenly plunged a sword into his heart, exclaiming, "This is to avenge the death of my father!" He then returned to Mentz, and resumed his episcopal functions, without having given any offence to his church by this conduct.

Charlemagne exerted himself to introduce better order. He gathered pious and learned men about him, established seminaries, reformed the church singing, and abolished many abuses. But the corruption had spread too far and too deeply, and one man's life was too short for removing all the abominations which had accumulated within the ecclesiastical pale. The monasteries, which were originally intended as nurseries of true religion, and as peaceful receptacles for the devout, who wished to retire from the increasing evils of the times, had now generally become the abodes of

every possible vice, and, in the countries where Christianity had been longest known, proved no barrier against the universal corruption. All efforts were used in every quarter for turning aside the faith of Christians from "the things which are not seen," and directing them to "the things which are seen;" in other words, to convert faith into fancy and superstition. Men, instead of placing their hope in Christ, and him crucified and exalted, placed it in the sign of the cross, or in a crucifix; and resembled the Jews, who, in the days of Ahras, worshipped the brazen serpent which Moses had formerly set up in the wilderness for a very different purpose. Instead of living in the mind and spirit of their ancient confessors and martyrs, they collected their mouldering bones and other relics for superstitious veneration, or they prayed to their images. As early as in the fifth century, Christians had begun to pay undue regard to the images of Christ, the virgin Mary, the apostles, the martyrs, and other holy men; and, in the seventh century, prayer was offered to departed saints, under the notion that they were intercessors with God. In the Greek church, there arose long and violent controversies about image worship; and though Charlemagne, at the synod of Frankfort, got it condemned, it continued to gain ground in the west, and was commanded and promoted by the popes. To consummate that ungodliness which became the distinctive mark of the church in subsequent centuries, there were only wanting the fire and sword, which they soon learned to employ, in persecuting the faithful. The latter, it is true, were few enough at that time; and indeed not many, even of them, had sufficient knowledge of the pure truth, to see through all the disorder, and to withstand it.

Still there remained some vestiges of a Christian church—some persons who resisted the prevailing corruptions in doctrine and morals, and particularly the claims of papal domination. Indeed, we might expect, that among those who had the word of God, there should be some who would regulate by it their ideas

of the Christian church, and who would bear their testimony against its degeneracy. And it is gratifying to find a few notices in history, respecting a church of devout worshippers embosomed in the deep vales of the snow-covered Italian Alps, who became an object of attention in the eighth century. This was the church of the Vallenses, which doubtless had the same origin with the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont, of whom we shall speak hereafter. It is easy to comprehend how a community, which had withdrawn from the degenerate church, and endeavoured to serve the Lord in their secluded valleys, should have written no particular accounts of their own history; and that we should, therefore, have but few memorials of their first settlement, and of the retired life they led from one century to another. In the Atlantic Ocean there grows a plant from the bottom of the sea, with a stem perhaps eight hundred feet in length; its flowering summit is only part visible above water, while no human eye can see far down its long stem, much less discern its root. In like manner did the church of the Vallenses appear all at once conspicuous on the surface of public history; but of their first origin, and their eight hundred years' growth, history furnishes no accurate account. Only a few intimations are to be found, scattered here and there, which are so interesting that we insert them.

When Christianity had begun to decline, many, who were sensible of the increasing errors and corruptions, withdrew from time to time into secret communities, and mutually bound themselves to hold faithfully the truth of the gospel as contained in Scripture, and to walk according to it, in conformity with that church discipline which had been prescribed by the apostles. We find a considerable number of such persons in the eighth century, and, according to some historians, much earlier still, inhabiting the recesses of the Apennines, secluded from the observation of the pope and his adherents. They and their descendants trace their confession of faith and succession of

bishops to the earliest Christians, and even to the apostles. Ancient tradition informs us, that St. Paul, on his way from Rome to Spain, planted this church of the Vallenses among the Apennines. It is certain, that when this church became publicly known, it was found to be of high antiquity; and we can more easily explain how a church, thus concealed among inaccessible Alps, might preserve her primitive purity, than how she could have first attained to such a purity amidst the growing corruptions of the general church. Scarcely any change of manners, language, dress, or even of superstition, takes place during whole centuries among inhabitants of very mountainous regions; for they are almost shut out from the influence of those changes which the world undergoes. Indeed, as long as the word of God is not taken away from the earth, a renovation of the church from any condition, however deeply sunk and desolated, is always to be hoped for. But it is cheering to learn, that while the rivers of tribulation and the floods of destruction were spreading in every direction, a little branch of the true church remained amidst the lonely Alps, worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and serving to prove the fulfilment of our Saviour's promise, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

THIRD PERIOD.

FROM POPE GREGORY VII. TO THE REFORMATION.

[A.D. 1073 to A.D. 1517.]

I.—EXTENSION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

WHEN the eastern churches, which Christ's apostles and their eminent successors had founded, had, in the course of centuries, so degenerated that God suffered them to be desolated by the arm of Mohammedan power, it was hardly to be expected that, in countries where Christianity had been planted by force of arms, and grew so poorly from the very first, a very fertile garden of the Lord would be found. Yet so it was in Saxony; and at the period of the Reformation that country was a seminary and nursery of new life to the generally devastated church, and even to the whole human race. So wonderful are the ways of God, by which he developes and hastens his kingdom. He bringeth to nought that which is glorious in human eyes; and what we little value, he blesses with unexpected increase. He dries up mighty rivers, and commands water from the flinty rock. Let us not, therefore, despise the day of small things, while his work is in the hands of weak and defective instruments; for who knows what it shall one day amount to, when he shall revive it with his gracious visitation? Thus, the work of missions in those times had a very unpromising appearance, regarded only as to what *men* were doing; but the great end to which God was conducting it, through all human infirmities, gives to such weak beginnings an unspeakable importance. At the close of the preceding period, the Normans in Sweden and Norway, as also in the north of France, had been

brought over to Christianity; missionary labours had been prosecuted with effect among the Wends between the Elbe and the Oder, as likewise among the people of Moravia and Bohemia; and, at the end of the tenth century, Christianity had been conveyed to distant Iceland, and to still more distant Greenland. Otho, bishop of Bamberg, laboured with signal success in heathen Pomerania, and the barbarous inhabitants of the island of Rugen were forced, by the Danish arms, to abandon idolatry, and to admit among them the Christian religion. The excellent Vicelinus preached for thirty years, till 1154, among the Sclavonians in Holstein and the neighbouring country, and was a shining light in a dark period. The Esthonians, the Livonians, and the Courlanders were constrained to profess Christianity: the former by the arms of the Danes, and the latter two by the victories of the sword-knight; and the Prussians were compelled to do the same in consequence of the sanguinary war of the German knights, which lasted fifty-three years, from 1230 to 1283. These nations would, of course, but little value a gift thrust upon them by the point of the sword; and yet it has been the lot of their descendants to enjoy the benefits of a religion which had come to them in such an unseemly way. A century after this, the Lithuanians were added to the number of Christian nations. It was not till the end of the fifteenth century that the Spaniards succeeded, under Ferdinand their king, in expelling from Spain the remnant of the Mohammedan Moors; and soon afterwards, in 1492, the discovery of America opened a new and wide field for the extension of that form of Christianity which then prevailed. This, however, was effectuated in such an unchristian and barbarous manner, and what the Spaniards brought to the Americans as the religion of Jesus so little resembled it, that we have no wish here to give it further notice.

II.—TEMPORAL AFFLICTIONS OF THE CHURCH.

THE Christian church has at all times, with scarcely any other exception than that of the first century, too much resembled in its conduct the Jewish zealots; who, during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, carried on rancorous civil war with one another. Though hard pressed from without, she had not been prudent enough to be at unity within herself, in order to withstand the common enemy. Her children have too often had to stand separately, and to bear the brunt apart. When the eastern church had suffered losses so unspeakably great, through the Mohammedan conquests, it might have been expected that it would unite as closely as possible with the western church, for mutual support against any renewed attacks of the common enemy. But, instead of this, a grand schism ensued between these two churches soon afterwards, not so much on account of differences in ecclesiastical doctrine or discipline, as through contentions between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople for supremacy. The former wished to be universal master, and the latter would not submit to acknowledge a superior. Their contentions continued till the rupture was irremediable. From that time, the Catholic (that is, universal) church was split into Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic. The Greek empire was so weakened by the Arabian arms, and so abandoned by the west, that it could not protect its Christian establishments against the Mohammedans, and was repeatedly in the most imminent peril. The Mongolians, who, under their victorious princes, Gengis Khan and Tamerlane, had invaded Europe, been masters of Russia for two centuries, and had desolated Poland, now stretched their dominion to the borders of Silesia; the eastern church had suffered much by their devastating march, and whatever survived the Arabian wars in Asia was nearly annihilated by these succeeding powers. The acquisitions also of the Nestorians, in the interior of Asia, were reduced almost to nothing

at this period. And while the Greek empire maintained a perpetual struggle with the Saracens and Turks, one trial was continually succeeding another in the west. The Saracens had fixed themselves in the south of Italy and in Sicily; the Christians of Spain were ever at war with their Moorish settlers; and Germany had frequently to guard against the irruptions of pagan borderers.

From time to time, in the course of several centuries, there were severe visitations by pestilence, which carried off many thousands of Christians. In the year 544, a pestilence spread from Egypt over the whole world, having reached Constantinople the year after its first appearance in Egypt; daily, for a long time together, five thousand persons died of it in that city, and sometimes the daily deaths amounted to ten thousand and upwards. Its progress through the world lasted fifty-two years, so that the greatest part of that generation was swept away by it. In the year 717, the pestilence arrived a second time at Constantinople, and destroyed, in three years, three hundred thousand lives. In the year 825, during the reign of Lewis the Pious, the pestilence carried off a great part of the population of France and Germany. But more terrible still was the pestilence that broke out in the year 1345. It commenced its ravages in the east, and made indescribable havoc in that quarter of the world. From a report transmitted to the pope, it appears that in a single year about twenty-four millions of persons perished by it in the east. It soon reached Greece and Italy, and made similar ravages. In Venice alone, the number of the dead was computed at one hundred thousand; and in Florence, at sixty thousand. With dreadful severity it then invaded France, Germany, and the neighbouring countries. Even in those which were the least affected by it, two persons out of every three died; and, in many places, fourteen or sixteen out of every twenty. There were parts of the world in which not a single adult remained alive. In Germany, millions perished; in Lubeck, one thousand five

hundred persons died in four hours. In August, 1348, it reached England, and was in London on the 1st of November. In the churchyard of Yarmouth, then a small town, seven thousand and fifty-two persons were buried in one year. A large field was purchased in the vicinity of London for interring the multitude of dead. When the pestilence had ceased, a monument was erected upon this enormous dormitory of fifty thousand persons. It ceased in England just one year after its first appearance there; but its effects were dreadfully felt throughout all Europe. The oxen, sheep, and other cattle, strayed about the country in large droves, and did much damage. Harvests were lost for want of reapers, and an ensuing famine filled up the measure of this dreadful visitation. The poor Jews drank the last dregs of this unprecedented calamity. The ignorant multitude of that rude period, believing that this people had poisoned the springs and wells, fell upon them with unrelenting fury, so that thousands of Jews were massacred. Here is one proof how little the end of this Divine visitation was improved to produce repentance and conversion to God!

An infection of another kind, which likewise swept away several millions of human beings, broke out in France at the end of the eleventh century, and spread itself from that country over nearly all Christendom. This was the spirit of crusade. As early as the fifth century, it had become a prevailing notion that a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and a prayer offered on the sacred spot where Christ suffered, or over his supposed grave, was a thing meritorious to the forgiveness of sins. Hence the custom of making pilgrimages to the holy sepulchre soon obtained very generally. But, after the Seldshuk Turks had taken Palestine, the pilgrims were often ill-treated; and one of them, Peter of Amiens, at his return, persuaded the pope to summon all the Christian world to the rescue of the holy sepulchre out of the hands of the infidels, that the faithful might perform their devotions at it unmolested.

Peter travelled from town to town, and from country to country, preaching up a crusade with the most ardent zeal, and inviting all Christendom to join in the enterprise, promising, in the pope's name, to every one who should do so, a place in heaven, as the reward for so meritorious an act.

Vast multitudes everywhere with enthusiasm accepted the proposal, had their names enrolled, and were distinguished by the badge of the red cross, and the expedition was called *Croisade*, or *Crusade*. Such a phenomenon in human history, as a mass of whole nations set in motion by religious enthusiasm, at a period when mental cultivation was so scanty, appears very remarkable, especially compared with our coldly enlightened age, which is so unsusceptible of all excitement on religious accounts: it also serves to show, that superstition can command what infidelity cannot; but then, as the spring of these great movements was not true faith, which requires entire self-renunciation and self-denial, but only superstition, which, with every sacrifice it makes, invites self-love to feast upon the offering, we dare not ascribe those vast exertions to any really religious motives. Pious individuals no doubt there were, who took up the matter less superficially; but we cannot from them form our opinion of the generality. In the year 1096, a host of several hundred thousand armed warriors marched from different countries of Europe towards Palestine, under the command of Godfrey, duke of Bouillon. Of all these, however, only sixty thousand remained alive at the taking of Jerusalem from the Mussulmen in 1099. Godfrey was made king of Jerusalem, but died soon after; and the survivors had to endure perpetual conflicts with the courageous Mussulmen. A general desire of joining in these crusades pervaded all western Christendom; and, on one occasion, a host of one hundred thousand children actually set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; but most of them perished before they reached the frontiers of Germany. Though several princes of Europe subsequently went with

THE CRUSADERS—KNIGHT TEMPLARS.



large armies to Palestine, to succour the oppressed Christians in that country, yet Jerusalem was lost again in the year 1187; and all the subsequent efforts of the western powers were insufficient to establish a permanent kingdom there. When nearly all the great European princes of two centuries had in vain tried their strength against the hereditary foe of Christianity, and more than six millions of men had sacrificed their lives in the attempt, the town of Ptolemais, the last military station possessed in that country by the Christians, (which is called Accho in the book of Judges, i. 31, and in modern times St. Jean d'Acre,) "fell, A.D. 1291, into the hands of the Turks. True Christianity gained nothing at all by these crusades, but they brought some accession to trade and commerce. The Turks, on the contrary, as the declining Greek empire was no longer able to oppose them, made continual encroachments upon the remnant of its provinces in Asia Minor and Europe, and put an end to it entirely by the taking of Constantinople, in the year 1453. They pushed their power to the borders of Hungary, from whence they afterwards, on several occasions, menaced Germany itself.

III.—THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT ITS LOWEST DEGRADATION.

To what a depth of ignorance must men have sunk, when it was the prevailing opinion that salvation was to be earned by adventurous and romantic military enterprise! How estranged from the living Christ must those have been who imagined they had attained all, if they but made themselves masters of his empty sepulchre! When we hear that the crusaders brought with them from their distant expeditions a variety of relics, such as pieces of Christ's cross, his clothes, instruments with which he was tortured, etc., all which it was pretended were genuine; also, that they believed

they had brought home a beam of the star which was seen by the wise men of the east, a portion of the sound of the bells of Jerusalem, a spar of the celestial ladder which Jacob saw in his dream, and the very thorn in the flesh which was sent to St. Paul; and when we hear that the generality were ready to credit such impostures, and made pilgrimages to shrines where the pretended holy relics were deposited—we are quite astonished, and ask, Is all this possible? So gross was the darkness of that period, and so lost was the knowledge of the word of God among the people, and with it all knowledge in general!

Books were so difficult to be procured in Spain, that, at the beginning of the tenth century, a Bible in Latin, the epistles of Jerome, and a few volumes of liturgies and martyrology, were frequently all that could be had for the joint use of several monasteries; and, in an inventory of the bishop of Winchester, bearing date A.D. 1294, the whole episcopal library is found to consist only of a few portions of seventeen books on various sciences. The same prelate, in the year 1297, borrowed of a monastery in Winchester a Bible with marginal annotations, in two large folio volumes, and gave a bond, drawn up with great solemnity, in which he promises the safe restoration of the volumes to their owners. This elaborate ms. was the work of his predecessor, who had bequeathed it to the monastery; and the monks, in consideration of so important a bequest, established a daily mass for the soul of the deceased donor. Whenever a book arrived at any place, it was considered an event of such importance, that persons of rank generally met to receive it, and to give a formal testimonial of its having safely reached them; and contention for the ownership of a single volume often occasioned violent disputes. Equally common was it to advance money on the loan of a book; and there were public chests at the universities, for the reception of books thus entrusted upon loan. The price of books, at this period, was of course enormous. In the year 1174, the prior of a monastery

at Winchester bought of the monks of D^rchester, in Oxfordshire, a volume containing one of the works of the venerable Bede, and another volume containing the Psalter of Augustine, for twelve bushels of barley, and a mantle, on which was embroidered in silver the history of St. Birinus,* who converted a king of the Saxons. In the year 1274, the price of a handsome ms. of the Bible was no less than 33*l*.; and a very common copy of the Psalter with notes cost, before the year 1300, at least 8*l*. 5*s* sterling. These were at that time enormous sums; for, in the year 1272, a day labourer could earn but about three-halfpence a day, so that he would be obliged to labour about fifteen years before he could earn enough to purchase a Bible; and the expense of such a purchase was greater than that of building two new arches to London Bridge, which, in the year 1240, cost only 27*l*. 10*s*. Difficult beyond me sure, as it thus was, for private persons to obtain possession of the Scriptures, it was rendered still more so by certain decrees against reading them at all. James I. king of Arragon, in the year 1276, prohibited any translation of the Bible into the language of the country, and enjoined that whosoever of the clergy or laity possessed such a translation should produce it to the authorities to be burned. Though Alphonsus, king of Castile, about the same time, caused the Scriptures to be translated into the language of his country, the popes, whose power extended everywhere, soon forbade translations of the Bible to be made into any modern language, and prohibited the use of such as had been made. John Wickliff, between the years 1360 and 1380, translated the whole of the Scriptures into English;† but, forty years afterwards, king Henry v. of England issued a proclamation, that whosoever

* At this very day may be read the cast inscription on the Dorchester bells, "*Sancte Birine, ora pro nobis.*" TRANS.

† Manuscript copies of Wickliff's Bible are still not uncommon. An emblazoned one in folio, and very legible, is shown at the Bodleian library, Oxford. TRANS.

should read the Holy Scriptures in the English language should forfeit his estate and life, and that his property should be confiscated.

It is true that scientific pursuits were promoted, by the establishment of the high schools of Paris and Bologna; and that the schoolmen flourished at this period in France; but no spiritual benefit to the poor in general could accrue from these institutions: for they concerned not so much the word of God, as the writings of Aristotle, and disputations upon unprofitable subtleties. The celebrated reformer, Philip Melancthon, relates, that, in his younger days, he heard of persons preaching on Aristotle's Ethics, instead of the gospel; and that he heard a doctor of divinity, at Stuttgart, say, in the pulpit, that "should the Bible ever be lost, the church would be compensated by retaining the Ethics of Aristotle!" Though there were some pious men at this period, as Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, and Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, they themselves were not free from the manifold superstitions of their times, but commended the monastic life. Anselm forwarded the papal pretensions, and Bernard even approved of the persecutions carried on against the faithful Waldenses. The spiritual necessities of the people in general were not thought of; schools were found only in monasteries, and even these were, for the most part, badly conducted.

Religious festivals and solemnities, indeed, went on increasing; and most of the magnificent minsters and cathedrals, the noble architecture and grandeur of which we still admire, were built about this time. But preaching was seldom heard of; the principal service was the mass, a deformed celebration of the Lord's supper, in which Christ is pretended to be for ever offered by the priests, the bread to be changed into Christ's real body, and the wine into his real blood, and that Christ's bones, and even his soul, are present in the consecrated wafers. All the services of religious worship were performed in the Latin language, which none of the laity understood, and often not the

priests themselves. Adoration of the saints and of their images, especially of the virgin Mary, and the honouring of relics, prevailed more and more; while auricular confession and indulgences preyed on the vitals of the church. For whoever sought forgiveness of sins was directed, not to repentance and faith, not to true and spiritual conversion, but to breviaries, fasts, pilgrimages, scourging, and other penances; or was prevailed upon to purchase remission and absolution by the payment of a sum of money to the church. The pope assumed the exclusive right of imparting plenary absolution; and this for money, or other considerations. Special purchases of the kind were made, and open contracts drawn up, by virtue of which the supernumerary merits which monks believed they had acquired by fasting, psalm-singing, watchings, and the like, were made over to others, whether alive or dead, for certain rates of payment. Thus it was a necessary consequence of this penance-tax of the court of Rome, that no comfort could be administered to the poor, because they had no means of purchasing it. Things at length arrived at such an extremity, that persons were believed to partake of the merits of the monks, by wearing only their cowls. Hence even eminent men and princes left directions for their own bodies to be interred in these monastic dresses.

When all sins could thus be remitted for money, it may easily be supposed how lightly sin was thought of. Indeed, both the secular clergy and the monastic orders took the lead in vice and wickedness. The grossest sins, especially of incontinence, were shamelessly practised by all ranks, both of clergy and laity, so that the synod of Basle, in the year 1431, acknowledged that every restraint of discipline and decency had become nearly annihilated. And Eneas Sylvius, subsequently pope, who wrote about this time, says, "Were it required, the people would worship the heathen gods, and renounce Christianity altogether; for love is waxed cold, and faith has suffered shipwreck." A Benedictine monk, of the same period, depicts the

unlimited corruption of the church in the following terms: "The law had departed from the priests, judgment from the rulers, and counsel from the elders; good faith from the people, reverence of superiors from the children, loyal affection from subjects, religion from the prelates, devotion from the monks, modesty from the nuns, discipline from the young, learning from the clergy, diligence from teachers, subjection from learners, reason and moderation from domestics, justice from the judges, obedience from the military, concord from citizens, public spirit from the peasantry, ability from artists, honesty from buyers and sellers, beneficence from the rich, chastity from young women, virtue from widows, and conjugal fidelity from married persons. Christ is not at all regarded, but is treated as a stranger, by the great ones of these times."

Such was the aspect of things throughout the Christian church; the whole body of it was become leprous and corrupt. Let us now inquire after the pretended head of this body. Christendom had for a long time been disused to the notion, that the head of the church is One who is invisible; and had long forgotten that word of the Lord, "One is your Master, even Christ." The bishops of Rome had availed themselves of troublous times to root their own power still deeper and deeper, and to extend their baleful influence farther and farther. Charles the Bald, a king of the Franks, had purchased of the bishop of Rome the imperial dignity itself, and others had followed his example. The powerful Germanic emperors, since the time of Otho the Great, had set some limits to the papal encroachments on their prerogative; but, in the year 1073, a man mounted the papal throne who would no longer brook any of these restrictions. This was Hildebrand, the son of an Italian carpenter, who had been created pope by the name of Gregory the Seventh. Having succeeded in raising himself from the lowest condition to the papal dignity, he projected the enterprise of elevating the deeply degraded church to higher splendour

than ever, by exalting the rank of the clergy, and increasing the power of the pope; and he eagerly set about his object with the utmost determination. He was resolved that the whole church, with its ministers, should be in absolute subjection to himself, and made totally independent of the secular power; indeed, all princes themselves were to be at his beck and command. For this purpose he prohibited the sale of ecclesiastical functions, and obliged all clerical persons to celibacy, that they, with their property, might be the more independent of secular influence, and be exclusively devoted to the service and disposal of the church. He wrested from the emperor the right of nomination to vacant bishopricks, leaving to the bishops and archbishops only so much power in their respective dioceses and provinces as he thought convenient. As St. Peter's pretended successor, and as the pretended vicar of Christ, he demanded the homage and obedience of emperors, kings, and princes, and arrogated the right of granting them and taking from them their respective dominions. Thus he declared himself the supreme temporal and spiritual lord and judge of the world! And those arrogant claims he actually found means of enforcing. When the German emperor, Henry IV., refused to acknowledge his pretensions, he incurred a serious dispute with Hildebrand, which brought on an open rupture. The pope put him under the ban of excommunication, absolved the emperor's subjects from their allegiance, and summoned the German princes to elect a new emperor. And so great was the superstitious dread of the papal power now become, that the princes actually seemed disposed to listen to his summons; and Henry perceived that his continuance on the throne could only be secured by a humiliating submission. He therefore went to Italy, and supplicated absolution of Hildebrand, who was then residing at the castle of Canossa. But the pope made him wait in the castle-yard, barefoot, and dressed as a penitent in a hair shirt, for three whole days, in the depth of winter; nor was it

till the fourth day that he admitted him into his presence, and absolved him from the ban.

Hildebrand's reign was too short for the accomplishment of all his mighty projects; he died in 1086: but the papal power continued in its vigour. And here we may remark, that the whole history of that power exhibits one gigantic plan of government, which was never lost sight of, whatever private character belonged to each individual pope.

Innocent III., who was pope between the years 1198 and 1216, was the most successful in perfecting what Hildebrand had begun. All that bishops had to do, at a general council which he summoned, was simply to subscribe their names to his absolute decrees. He spoke of kings and emperors as his servants and menials. He punished them with excommunication, and put their territories under an interdict, which the superstitious populace regarded with indescribable dread. For, as long as the interdict remained, all public worship in the whole country was suspended, and every one was obliged to wear habiliments of mourning and excommunication. The dead were interred without funeral rites, out of the limits of consecrated ground, and no prayers or singing could be used on the occasion; marriages were solemnized at the side of graves, and no person was permitted to salute another in the streets or highways. It was by such methods that Innocent extorted the kingdom of England from John Lackland, made a donation of it to the king of France, and only restored it upon John's sending his abject submission to the papal authority, with the promise of an annual tribute to the see of Rome. The potent emperors of the Carlovingian dynasty, in particular, suffered much from such encroachments, and hence were perpetually embroiled with the papal power; till at length Conradin, the last of that race of monarchs, in the year 1269, lost his head upon the scaffold. Innocent III. was also the founder of the inquisition, a tribunal erected for judging and condemning heretics, which was committed, in the year 1233, to

the management of the Dominican monks. This institution reduced to regular system the prosecution and punishment of those who entertained sentiments at variance with the tenets of the Romish church: the most cruel tortures were thus applied to persons accused of heresy: and, unless they recanted, or even sometimes when they did, the accused were doomed to be burned alive.

The cruelties secretly perpetrated in the gloomy chambers of the inquisition are too horrible fully to relate. The first torture inflicted was that of drawing the accused person up a forked beam, with his head downwards, leaving him suspended by the feet fastened respectively to each fork; the superior Dominican then addressed him, saying, "Confess, my son, confess!" When this had no effect, he was suspended by the wrists tied together, with a heavy weight hanging to his feet, and kept in this posture till the violent pain extorted the most piteous groans, which his persecutors endeavoured to drown with loud mockeries, calling him dog and heretic. They next directed the tormentors, after slackening the rope, to draw the poor sufferer up and down from the ceiling, till his joints were dislocated. A brief respite was then allowed; but, if he persisted in confessing nothing, he was laid on his back in a kind of trough, with crossing splinters underneath him, so contrived as to pierce the back with severe wounds. While he lay in this position, the lower part of his face was covered with a piece of fine linen, to intercept his breathing, and on this was a quantity of water spouted with violence, so as to force the middle part of the cloth down into the throat. This torture was continued till the faithful sufferer was at the last gasp; the linen was then suddenly tugged out of the throat with violence, and was followed by a stream of blood. When all these cruelties were ineffectual to make the accused confess things which he knew not, or to betray any of his brethren, his feet were placed over an iron pan of red hot coals, and basted with grease, until they were thoroughly roasted.

This specimen of the horrid tortures of the inquisition will suffice. It is almost incredible how many victims, in Spain alone, fell a sacrifice to this infernal institution, which practised its abominations, under the veil of secrecy and night, in the most privately secluded cells and chambers. It was also Innocent III. who proclaimed a crusade against the pious Waldenses, whom we shall presently have to notice.

A new means of papal domination was set on foot by Boniface VIII., who perceived that, without large sums of money, it was impossible to carry into effect all the plans which his ambitious predecessors had devised. He therefore hit upon the design of ordaining, for every century, a special year of indulgence, during which all who should make a pilgrimage to Rome were to receive plenary absolution from all sins. The year 1300 was the first year appointed for this purpose, and it yielded the pope and the city of Rome a very large revenue. From one month to another about two hundred thousand pilgrims arrived at Rome, all of whom brought presents of more or less value. Such splendid success became so alluring in the eyes of the court of Rome, that they appointed this jubilee to return every fiftieth year, and at length every twenty-fifth; and plenary indulgences were even sold to such as could not appear at Rome in person.

This abject veneration for the pontiffs is the more remarkable, as so many of them were notoriously of most immoral character. The council of Constance, which decreed the burning of that faithful witness John Huss, publicly deposed pope John XXIII. as an atheist, and guilty of the most abominable crimes; and yet one, who was afterwards his successor, was instrumental in restoring him to the papal chair! Innocent VIII. had sixteen illegitimate children, for whom he provided out of his patronage. Alexander VI. was a monster of cruelty and debauchery, and died by poison, which he had prepared for some of his cardinals. Julius II. embroiled Italy and other countries in war. There were, at times, two or three popes together,

one set up against the other, disputing their sovereignty by violence and arms. In short, there is no succession of monarchs to be found in history, to which so large a catalogue of crimes can be attached as to that of the popes.

IV.—THE WALDENSES.

It is a very pleasant relief to turn away from papal abominations, in order to look after the obscure traces of a true church of Jesus Christ, which, amidst the increasing apostasy of the bulk of nominal Christians, was preserved from contamination through all those centuries of predominant wickedness! We have already noticed the peaceful little band of Vallenses, shut up among the Apennines. These, however, were not the only people whose doctrine and lives testified against the increasing depravation of the church, and the wicked pretensions of the papacy; for it appears, from intimations in history, that from the beginning they had a body of associates in their faith and testimony, who were known by the common name of Waldenses. At different times, however, and in different places, they were distinguished by various other names; and as to their connexion with the Vallenses, who held the same sentiments, we can only say that both names are of similar import, and that the term Vallenses was commonly applied to those witnesses of the truth who resided in the Apennines, while that of Waldenses distinguishes principally those who inhabited the south of France. As early as the year 1100, it was common in the Romish church to say, "He is a Waldensian, and deserves to be hanged." One of their bitterest persecutors, a friar of Turin, says of them, "It cannot be accurately determined at what period this sect arose; but their origin must be at least as early as the tenth, or even the ninth century." We find a chief persecutor of the Waldenses, in the

thirteenth century, writing of them as follows: "The sect of the Waldenses is the oldest of any; some say they are as ancient as the time of bishop Sylvester I. of Rome; and others even trace them up to the apostolic age." This is confirmed by an archbishop of Turin, who was likewise their adversary; his words are: "There must have been great and powerful reasons why this sect has continued so many centuries; and this, notwithstanding all sorts of people, armed with the greatest power, have from time to time laboured in vain to extirpate them; for they have ever invariably triumphed, contrary to all human expectation, and have always been found invincible." He adds, that the sect of the Waldenses originated from Leo, a man of remarkable piety, in the time of Constantine the Great; that this Leo renounced communion with bishop Sylvester I. of Rome, through disgust at that prelate's avarice, and at the immoderate expenditure which the emperor lavished on the clergy; and that he withdrew to a remote province, followed by a great number of Christian people. We have purposely omitted to notice what the Waldenses say of themselves; who have all along maintained that their church was founded by the apostles, and has continued unadulterated ever since; for such a testimony might be regarded as partial. But as their most inveterate opponents have admitted that the Waldensian churches extend back to the apostolic period, this is a pleasing corroboration of the fact, that through all the ages of Christian history, however corrupt, there has remained a true church of God preserved from the degenerate mass, though concealed by their quiet and obscure condition, and that the seed of the righteous, who, like those in Elijah's time, would not bow the knee to Baal, has never perished.

In different countries, and at different times, these witnesses of the truth, who especially confronted the papacy and the corrupt clergy, were called Albigenses, Leonists, Picards, Arnoldists, or *the poor men of Lyons*. In Germany, about the twelfth century, they

were called Cathari, that is, "the pure ones," because it was their aim to keep themselves pure from the erroneous doctrines and abuses of the church. And the adherents to their doctrines in England were called Lollards, after a person named Lollard, who was burned alive at Cologne, upon the charge of heresy, and had preached the Waldensian doctrines to the English at Guyenne. In the fourteenth century, there were in Bohemia alone, and in the Austrian provinces, about eighty thousand of these Cathari, or Waldenses. Others were found about the same period in France, Italy, and Sicily; Dalmatia, Croatia, and Sclavonia; Constantinople and Greece; Bulgaria, Livonia, and Poland; Flanders, England, and Spain. They were separate from the dominant church, and distinguished from it more or less at different periods, according as they renounced its tenets, and protested against its practices. Thus the Albigenses, about the year 1200, were a very numerous Christian body, entirely distinct from the church of Rome; others externally conformed to it, to avoid persecution, or till they became better acquainted with its corruptions. Of course, they were of different degrees of attainment in purity and knowledge of the word of truth; neither were they all of one opinion upon some points of doctrine. But all agreed in being dissatisfied with the wretchedly degraded state of Christianity, and in being averse to popish dominion over faith and conscience. The Waldensian confession in the south of France, where probably it was purest, contained the following particulars, from which we learn what were the errors of the dominant church in those times, which they opposed.

They held, "1. That Scripture, entirely independent of human authority, is the only rule in all matters of faith and salvation. 2. That there is but one Mediator, and that no invocation ought to be made to saints. 3. That the fire of purgatory is a fiction. 4. That there are but two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper. 5. That the mass is to be rejected,

and particularly the use of masses for the dead. 6. That all religious ordinances of merely human institution, as Romish fasts, needless festivals, monastic orders, pilgrimages, and such ceremonies, are to be rejected. 7. That any supremacy of the pope over other bishops, and the power claimed by him over temporal magistrates, are utterly to be denied. They acknowledge, however, three distinct offices, of bishops, priests, and deacons. 8. That Scripture allows and enjoins communion in both kinds. 9. That the church of Rome is the Babylon spoken of in the Apocalypse; that the pope is an originator of all manner of errors, and is Antichrist. 10. That the traffic of indulgences, and the Romish injunction of celibacy upon the clergy, are inadmissible. 11. That those who hear the word of God, and understand it, are the church of God; and that to this church was committed by Christ the power of the keys; therefore she can and ought to expel from her the wolves, to call and appoint pious and true pastors, to hear their voice, and to receive the sacramental ordinances at their hands."

It was by constant attention to the Scriptures that they arrived at such accurate knowledge of the truth. The word of God was their daily food and refreshment, which was accompanied with prayer and praise; these were enjoyments which they never intermitted, even during their manual labour. Hence the most ordinarily gifted among them were extensively acquainted with the word of God. Some of them could repeat a whole book, and others the whole of the New Testament; for every father of a family acted as its spiritual priest; and each parent was a Christian instructor, the father teaching his sons, the mother her daughters; and the scholars themselves were set to teach the younger ones what they had learned. Nearly all the Waldenses could read and write, which at that time many a priest and bishop in the Romish church could not do. Their manner of life was simple, temperate, and blameless; and even their familiar conversation was tempered with the word of God. They supported themselves

by manual labour : chastity, humility, love and industry, were their beautiful ornaments. They called one



See page 117.

another brethren and sisters, and lived in true brotherly kindness and affection. They were faithful and obedient to their rulers ; and the unblemished conduct of the people gained them such confidence with their neighbours, that Waldensian servants and nurses were preferred above all others. Sancto Reimer, one of their most vehement opposers, could object nothing against them, except that they were the oldest sect, and had found their way into almost every country. He added, that while all other sects had made themselves abominable by their blasphemous tenets, these Waldenses had a great show of piety, living uprightly before men, believing well and correctly of God, and

holding all the articles of the apostles' creed; only they hated the Romish church and clergy.

They maintained their ministers, missionaries, and poorer brethren, solely by free contributions. For they had spiritual fellowship one with another, that important sign of a true and living church. Their bishops were accustomed to send out evangelists into all countries, to their different churches: and of these they always kept an accurate account. Such missionaries always went out two and two, and wherever they came, they discerned their brethren by signs affixed to the doors or roofs of their dwellings. Wherever they observed such sign on any house, they entered it, strengthened their brethren, instructed them in the word of God, exhorted them to steadfastness under persecution, prayed with them, comforted them in their temptations, and ordained elders and deacons, by laying on of hands, who administered the sacraments, and declared the true ground of Divine peace to men. These missionaries were called *passageni*, or *passagiers*, because they itinerated from country to country. And they everywhere found so many friends and brethren, that on a whole tour from Cologne to Milan, they could be lodged every night by persons of their own faith. The Waldensian community in general kept up a continual correspondence with their brethren in all countries; for which purpose they had confidential houses at Genoa, Florence, Venice, and other places, which they used as central stations for messengers and letters. This communion contributed, in no small degree, to the strengthening of believers, and to their advancement in practical godliness.

As there were Christian brethren in Bohemia long before the appearance of John Huss, although after his time they were denominated Hussites; so, in the south of France, there were pious Christians called Waldenses, long before Peter Waldo stood up as their teacher, which was about 1170. Peter Waldo, however, was an eminent man in his day, and is well worthy of our notice. He was originally a wealthy

merchant of Lyons, who was led in an extraordinary way to give attention to the Scriptures, and was pressed in spirit to impart to others what he had found so important and delightful to himself. He distributed his property among the poor, translated parts of the Scriptures, and passages from the fathers, into the vernacular language of his country, and distributed as many copies of these as he could command. He personally instructed in Christian truth his domestics and acquaintance, together with the poor of all descriptions whom he visited, and exhorted them to godliness. The more knowledge he acquired of the Scriptures, the more he perceived the apostasy and errors of the dominant church, and hence he could not be silent on such subjects in his addresses. Such a testimony, of course, could not be heard with indifference. Consequently, as soon as pope Alexander III. found that Waldo denounced the papacy, he excommunicated him and his adherents. Waldo fled into Picardy, and, though persecuted from city to city, he preached the gospel with much success wherever he came, collected a great number of followers, and finished his course by a natural death in Bohemia.

His followers were scattered, as salt of the earth, in all the countries of Christendom, and found in various quarters many brethren belonging to the old Waldenses, living in quiet and concealment, whom they encouraged and strengthened in the faith. Neither could all the cruel persecutions which ensued extirpate these witnesses of the faith. In the year 1209, pope Innocent III. proclaimed a *crusade* against the Albigenses, and promised, to all who should take part in it, plenary forgiveness of their sins.^o Hence an army of three hundred thousand men, under the command of Simon de Montfort, deluged for three years together the country of the Albigenses with bloodshed and every kind of oppression. The largest body of this people resided at Toulouse, under the patronage of Raymond, count of Toulouse. In another crusade, undertaken by the French king, Lewis VIII., the whole

city of Avignon was destroyed, and all its population massacred. Three hundred Waldensian villages and estates in Picardy were, at the same time, reduced to ruins. No adequate idea can be formed of the scenes of baseness, treachery, cruelty, and hypocrisy, of which the persecutors of these witnesses of the truth were guilty. Their first persecution lasted twenty years, destroying the lives of nearly a million of Waldenses. How great would the total be found, could we compute the number of victims sacrificed during the five centuries succeeding the year 1230! For, though they were more persecuted at one time than at another, scarcely did a year pass without something of the sort. While the above crusade was continuing in France, the Waldenses in other countries endured, for at least twenty years, violent severities from the relentless inquisition, which put to death great numbers of them, principally by burning them alive. Indeed, it was mainly with a view to their destruction that Innocent established the "holy inquisition." The number of its victims was at times so great, that their enemies could not build prisons fast enough to contain them, neither could they sustain the expenses of their captivity.

Some further account of these persecutions will serve to show the character both of the Waldenses and of their enemies. The garrison of Menerbe, on the Spanish frontier, consisted of Waldenses, and was compelled, for want of water, to surrender to the pope's legate. An ecclesiastic having undertaken to preach to them, urged their submission to the pope; but was interrupted, by their declaring that all his endeavours would be fruitless. Hereupon, Count de Montfort and the legate ordered a great fire to be prepared, in which one hundred and forty persons of both sexes were burned alive. These martyrs died exulting, and praising God that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. They reminded the count, that at the last day, when the books shall be opened, he would not escape the judgment of God. Of the whole

company, only three women were prevailed on, by urgent persuasion, to recant. While the severest cruelties were thus perpetrated on the faithful Waldenses, their steadfastness was such as to revive the scenes of primitive martyrdom. One of them, sixty years of age, having been bound by the barbarous soldiers to a bench with his hands behind him, a large horned beetle was placed upon his body, and confined there by a small inverted vessel, that the insect might penetrate to his vitals; and thus was the agonized sufferer destroyed by a slow process of almost unheard-of cruelty. Another of the Waldenses, Catelin Girard, was equally distinguished by his steadfastness. When he stood at the stake to be burned, he requested the executioners to hand him two pebbles, which being with some hesitation done, he held up a pebble in each hand, and exclaimed, "When I shall eat these, you will see me give up that faith for which you are putting me to death:" and, so saying, threw the stones away. A presbyter, named Arnold, was brought to the stake with nine other Waldenses, two of whom were women. When their bodies were half consumed by the fire, Arnold, rallying his strength, laid his roasted hands upon the singed heads of his companions, and said, "Abide stedfast in your faith; for you will this day be with Laurentius in paradise;" (see p. 37.) Even Raymond, count of Toulouse, could not refrain from saying, "I know that it will next be my own turn to lose my land and people on account of these good men; but I am ready not only to be driven from my domain, but to lay down my life for their sakes."

The inquisition, about the year 1250, oppressed the Waldenses in Germany with peculiar cruelty. But they held fast their profession. Their teachers publicly declared the pope to be Antichrist, and maintained that, if God had not sent *them* to Germany to preach the gospel, the very stones would have been awakened to do it in their stead. "We offer," they said, "no imaginary and popish absolution; we preach the forgiveness of sins, as God hath set it forth in his

holy word. About the year 1330, they were much harassed by an inquisitor named Eckard, a Dominican monk; but his conscience having begun to trouble him for the many cruelties he had inflicted, he requested them to explain the true reason of their aversion to the Romish communion. As an opportunity of this kind was seldom given them, they knew how to value it; and the result was in their favour. Eckard's mind became enlightened, he professed faith in Christ, agreeably to the pure word of God, joined himself to God's people; and, like St. Paul, preached that faith he had once laboured to destroy. He was afterwards burned alive at Heidelberg, as a faithful martyr. But the grievous blindness of many others is shown by the letter of an ecclesiastic to the pope, although the writer was one of the better sort. He says, "Some of them were seized and burned by the infuriated populace, from excess of zeal, and without our consent. But they went to the flames, not only with patience, but even with great joy; and I should be glad, holy father, to learn how to account for such great firmness in a set of persons who with all this are but members of Satan." We wonder not at such an expression as this, when we find that not merely wicked popes, with those worldly princes and lords who lived in blind subjection to Rome, not only the corrupt clergy and brutish populace of the day, but that even the pious Bernard of Clairvaux was offended at the poor Waldenses. It must have been a great trial to them, that this distinguished and holy man, who was revered almost as an oracle by all Christendom, should have been so prejudiced against them and their doctrine, as to regard them guilty of heresy, and to persecute them. Bernard was almost the only great man remaining in the dominant church who possessed any real religious worth; yet he also thought it his duty to oppose the Waldenses with the powerful influence he possessed; and it is probable that his opposition to them weakened the confidence of some respecting the righteousness of their cause.

*About the year 1400, the persecutors attacked the Waldenses in the vale of Pragela. When these poor people saw the enemy in possession of their caves and coverts, which had been invaded in the middle of winter, they fled to one of the loftiest Alpine mountains, the mothers carrying in cradle-baskets the most helpless of their children, and leading others who could walk. Numbers of them were put to the sword, or died of hunger: a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, or in the arms of their lifeless mothers, suffocated by the smoke of a great fire, which had been kindled at the mouth of their cave. The fires of the inquisition continued to burn till the year 1488, when Innocent VIII. found it most expedient to have recourse to military power. Eighteen thousand soldiers were raised for the purpose, and these were joined by many Roman Catholics in Piedmont, who hoped to share in the promised plunder. But the Waldenses, armed with wooden shields and crossbows, posted themselves in the narrow passes of their mountains, and repulsed their enemies; while their wives and children were on their knees, supplicating God to protect his people. Philip, duke of Savoy, was considerate enough to distinguish compulsory self-defence from rebellion, and issued to them a formal proclamation of pardon. Their enemies actually tried to persuade him that the children of the Waldenses were born with shaggy bodies, black necks, and four rows of teeth; but he ordered some of them to be brought to him at Pignerol, which of course fully convinced him that the Waldenses were no monsters, and he determined to protect them. But it should seem that he had not sufficient power to execute his good intentions: for the judges of heresy daily proceeded with their attacks upon these sincere followers of Christ, and the persecutions continued till the year 1532. About this time, the Waldenses in Piedmont began to hold public assemblies for religious worship, but this at length excited the secular power against them; hence it was given with more zeal than ever to

the support of papal domination. . They defended themselves, however, with spirit and success, obliged the Romish priests to quit their valleys, banished the mass from Piedmont, and got the whole of the Scriptures printed in the Waldensian language; as only the New Testament, with a few books of the Old, and these in ms., were possessed by them in that language, before the year 1525.

These brief notices of the Waldensian churches serve to show that they contained a people of God, who quite as much deserved the appellation of an evangelical church as our Protestant reformation church itself; and that it is not without good ground that we joyfully look forward to behold, among the noble army of martyrs and confessors, a great multitude of that long-persecuted people standing before the throne of God, and before the Lamb.

V.—THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN.

BOHEMIA obtained its evangelical instruction from Greece, in the ninth century. Two pious monks, Cyril and Methodius, natives of Thessalonica, were sent in the year 863 from Constantinople, to preach the gospel of Christ in Bulgaria. The sister of the Bulgarian king had become acquainted with Christianity during her detention as a captive at Constantinople, and, on return to her own country, she prevailed upon her brother to invite missionaries from that city. They arrived, and were allowed free access to the royal family. Methodius is said to have been expert in painting, which served to ingratiate him with the king, who desired him to paint some figures as terrific as he could represent them. Methodius made this an opportunity of depicting the last judgment, which he did so affectingly, that the king became concerned about his eternal welfare, and the result was his baptism. His example was soon followed

by his subjects; and Christianity having thus become spread over the whole country, the two missionaries had facilities for carrying the gospel further. They therefore turned towards Bohemia and Moravia, where they were likewise so successful, that, in the year 867, Borzivog, duke of Bohemia, received baptism, and a numerous Christian community was speedily formed in both countries. As members of the Greek church, they acknowledged neither the supremacy of the pope, nor the peculiar errors and abuses of Romanism. But popery, in the next century, used every endeavour to gain a footing in Bohemia. A Romish bishop was set up there; and the Greek communities of that country, though they still maintained their religious freedom, were brought into much spiritual danger, by seduction at one time, and persecution at another, so as greatly to need reviving and stirring up.

This need was providentially supplied by those Waldensian fugitives who, as we have already noticed, having been driven out of France, at the close of the twelfth century, settled in great numbers in Bohemia, and founded there a succession of churches, which even in the fourteenth century had their own regulations and ministers, and maintained communion with their brethren in Italy. By these lively and active Christians the Bohemian brethren were revived, and encouraged to stand fast in their profession, and in the Christian liberty they had hitherto enjoyed. And this revival was most seasonable; for soon afterwards, about the middle of the fourteenth century, no public exercise of religion, except the Romish, was any longer tolerated in Bohemia; and the use of the cup in the Lord's supper was denied to the laity.

From that time, the Bohemians could hold their religious meetings only in private houses and castles, or in woods and caverns, and even this at no small risk of their liberty and life. Many of them were assaulted in streets and highways, and were beaten, plundered, sentenced to hard labour in the mines, and even put to death; so that it was only in large companies, and

armed, that they could assemble at their religious meetings. Christian ministers of their own church stood up from time to time as witnesses of the truth, and revived the dying embers of their community. Such were Conrad Stiekna of Prague, John Mieliecz of Moravia, and Matthias von Janowsky. The last of these, who died in the year 1394, predicted to Wenzel, king of Bohemia, in the presence of many of his nobles, what wars would be further carried on in Bohemia on account of religion, and what difficulties his successor Sigismund would have to overcome; together with the premature death of his son, and the successful but short-lived reign of the family of Kunslad. "In the days of a king of this family," he added, "a weak and unarmed people will arise, who will show great zeal for the true religion, and the more they shall be oppressed and persecuted, they will only thrive and increase the more. But of all those in whose presence I now stand, one only will live to see it." That one was Wenceslaus, who afterwards related this prediction to the brethren, when he had joined their community at an advanced age. Janowsky had also, not long before his death, inserted a similar prediction in his book upon Antichrist.

But a more important and active champion than those here mentioned, was John Huss, a minister and university professor at Prague, a man of piety and talent, who preached with uncommon popularity. By diligent search of the Scriptures he had found many things in them very different from the doctrine of the Romish church; and, after he had become acquainted with the writings of Wickliff, his eyes were now quite opened.

Wickliff, who was born in England, in the year 1324, was a pious and learned man, who with great courage opposed the mendicant friars, the pretensions of the pope, and the gross errors and abuses of the Roman Catholic church. Having translated the Scriptures into English, he very urgently recommended their perusal, insisting that the word of God was

the only standard of doctrine and of practice. Much as he was opposed by the clergy, he effected very considerable good, both at home and abroad, by the Divine blessing upon his writings, lectures, disputations, preaching, and holy life. He died in peace, in the year 1384; but, twenty-eight years after his death, he was formally condemned as a heretic, and by the pope's command his bones were dug up and burned. The truths, however, which he taught, still lived among his followers, who were called Wickliffites, or Lollards, and were vehemently persecuted, but could not be suppressed. Wickliff's writings were widely circulated in Bohemia, and were made a great blessing there; for there still remained in that country much readiness to receive the pure truth, and a decided preference for it. Huss, in particular, derived strength and encouragement from these writings, and zealously defended them against Shíneck, archbishop of Prague, who ordered them to be burned. This archbishop was so ignorant, that when he was appointed to his office he could not read; whence we may easily infer, that it was to ingratiate himself with the pope that he condemned writings with which he must have been almost entirely unacquainted. That he was but little respected by the multitude may be seen by the following rude couplets, which were used as a proverb, in the Bohemian language:—

“Shíneck dooms heretics to hell,
Whose very names he scarce can spell;
And to the fire their books consigns,
Of which he cannot read two lines.”

Huss, by his opposition to the archbishop, and by his free and bold reprehension of the clergy, and of ecclesiastical abuses, caused many persons in power to be his bitter enemies. He was excommunicated by the pope, and every place where he resided was put under an interdict. Huss denied the pope's pretended authority to condemn other ministers of Christ; and having left Prague, he preached in towns and villages,

woods and fields, wrote good books and powerful letters, and his labours were extensively successful. Meanwhile a general council had commenced its sitting at Constance, for the professed reformation of the church, overrun as it was with abuses of every kind, and for wiping away the reproaches which had begun to be so justly cast upon the Romish hierarchy. But the church itself was now become like a diseased body, to which Isaiah's language, chap. i. 5, 6, was applicable in all respects: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." For many years it had been rent by continual strifes between popes and antipopes, and one of their number, John XXIII., was a man of very abominable character. Yet he was prevailed upon to call this general council of Constance in the year 1415, at which thirty-four cardinals, twenty archbishops, one hundred and sixty bishops, two hundred and fifty abbots, four electoral princes, twenty dukes, eighty counts, and more than seven hundred knights and noble personages were present. He reluctantly consented to attend it himself, though he had cause enough to fear lest he should not leave it in the same condition in which he entered it. In passing the Tyrolese mountains, on his way thither, his carriage was overturned; and then this man, who called himself the vicar of Christ upon earth, was heard to say, "Here I lie—in the devil's name—why did I not stay at Bologna?" When he came within sight of Constance, he exclaimed, "There is the trap to catch foxes!" And he himself was shortly after charged before the council with a long list of the grossest crimes, and was finally prevailed upon to abdicate the papal dignity. The emperor and the assembly so rejoiced at this, that they began to sing the Te Deum. But the pope had no idea of keeping his engagement; and, though he was closely looked after, he contrived

to escape to Schaffhausen, in the disguise of a waggoner. From Schaffhausen, he fled first to Lauffenburg, and then to Freiburg, in Breisgau, where he was intercepted, brought back to Constance, and confined in the castle of Gottlieben, the very place where he had treacherously confined John Huss, who still remained there as a prisoner: so that there was one example of those words in Rev. xiii. 10, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity."

Huss, having been cited to appear before the council, in November, 1414, to answer certain charges alleged against him, had obtained from the emperor Sigismund a "*safe conduct*," that is, a written promise, by virtue of which he was to go and return unmolested. But no sooner had he arrived at Constance than he was thrown into a dark dungeon, on pretence that no faith was to be kept with heretics. He was not unprepared for this, as he had made up his mind to suffer whatever should await him, for Christ's sake; and Christ was his light and consolation in the gloom of his imprisonment. Petitions for his release were presented to the emperor and council of Constance, from many noble families of Bohemia, and even from the provincial Estates of that country and of Moravia. But after Huss had been brought three times before the assembly, and required to make an open recantation of his sentiments, and had refused to do it unless he could be refuted out of the Scriptures, he was solemnly deposed, degraded, and condemned to die at the stake. A paper crown, painted with figures of devils, was placed on his head; but he rejoiced at bearing this badge of reproach, in consideration of Him who wore for him a crown of thorns. When his judges pronounced upon him the horrible sentence, "We deliver your soul to the devils in hell!" he exclaimed, "Into thine hands I commend my spirit, O Lord Jesus Christ! To thee I commit my soul, which thou hast redeemed!" As the martyr was led from prison to execution, he solemnly averred his innocence to the multitude; and when arrived at the stake, he kneeled and prayed with

such fervency, that some of the bystanders said aloud, "What this man has done we know not; but he makes excellent prayers." He would again have addressed



the people, but the prince elector of the palatinate commanded the execution to proceed. Huss then prayed aloud, "Lord Jesus! I humbly undergo this cruel death for thy sake; and I beseech thee to forgive all my enemies." His neck was now fastened to the stake with an iron chain, and his body with wet ropes, while fagots and straw were piled about him. The prince elector then approached, to admonish him once more to make the recantation he had so repeatedly refused. Huss replied, "What I have written and taught has been for the purpose of delivering souls from the power of Satan, and I am now quite willing to seal it with my blood." The elector then left him:

the pile was kindled, and Huss chanted a portion of that confession of faith for which he was so willing to lay down his life. While the flames were waving about him, he prayed, "Jesus Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy on me!" As he repeated these words the third time, the wind impelled the smoke into his face, and choked his utterance. His lips were seen still moving in prayer, while he reverently bowed his head for a few moments longer. Thus the Lord shortened the sufferings of his faithful servant, and took his soul unto himself, on the 6th of July, 1415, at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. His ashes were thrown into the Rhine. An honest Swiss, H. Reuchlin, says of this event: "There were many priests at Constance, but they burned the most pious man among them."

About the same time, another excellent minister of Prague, whose name was Jerome, who loved John Huss, and had come to Constance to assist his captive friend, was arrested on his return to Prague, and brought back to Constance. He was put in chains, and shut up in a dark dungeon of St. Paul's tower, his hands and legs were bound across, and his body riveted to a tall upright beam, with his head hanging down, and no possibility of sitting. In this situation he remained three hundred and forty days! Weakened by these severities, he signed a recantation, and yielded a forced assent to the condemnation of his martyred friend. But being still detained in prison, he very bitterly repented, and declared the same when brought before the council for his last examination. He was consequently burned alive on the same spot where Huss had died; and he expired with great joy, singing praises to God. His last words to those around him were to the executioner: "Bring your torch," he said, "and do your duty before my eyes: had I feared this death, I might have avoided it." It is a noble testimony which Eneas Sylvius, afterwards pope Pius II., gives of these two martyrs: "They went," he says, "to the stake as to a joyful festival; not a word of

timidity escaped their lips; but they incessantly sang hymns in the midst of the flames, to their very last breath."

Although Christians have much cause to be thankful when God raises up among them such men as Huss, yet they have no reason to faint or be discouraged when they lose them; for of all to whom the eye of our hope can be directed, One only is indispensable—One who will never either be burned at Constance, or imprisoned at Rome. It is He who alone worketh every good thing, in and by his servants, who is dependent on none of them, and is able to keep his vineyard by his own power, though all his husbandmen be slain. He takes care, however, that the faithful champions of Christ shall become like the branches of the banyan tree of India, which descend into the earth, not to perish, but to grow; so that should the original trunk be cut away or die, still a multitude of successive trunks survive, which form an embowering grove, and give shelter to the fowls of heaven. Though Huss was dead, the cause for which he had laboured still lived; and, after his departure, it was seen what numerous followers his preaching and writings had raised up to him, or rather to the gospel. In the next year, A. D. 1416, James, the bishop of Lodi, in an acrimonious speech at the council of Constance, just after the burning of Jerome, asserted, that burning at the stake was too lenient a punishment for those two heretics, who had been the authors of more mischief than any who ever went before them, and whose abominable heresies had flown abroad to England, France, Italy, Hungary, Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and throughout all Bohemia. Nor are we surprised that their doctrines spread so rapidly, and so far, when we consider that in each of those countries there were already great numbers who professed the faith of the Waldenses, and who would not fail to welcome these tidings of Huss, as a great encouragement to themselves. Between the years 1417 and 1458, many followers of Huss's doctrine were burned alive.

When the news of his martyrdom reached Bohemia and Moravia, it excited just indignation among his numerous friends in those countries. The provincial representatives drew up and sent a letter of bold remonstrance to the council of Constance, signed by more than a hundred knights, in which they triumphantly asserted the innocence of Huss, and declared themselves ready to sacrifice their own property and lives in defence of their faith. In Bohemia, every thing possible was done to honour his memory; and even the day of his martyrdom was set apart as an annual solemnity. • But as it has ever been the maxim of the papal government to carry through whatever it begins, it continued the persecution against Huss's followers, excommunicated them, deprived them of their property, and threw many of them into prison. The Hussites (as they were called) were hunted upon the mountains like beasts of prey, and those who were taken were sold as slaves. At Kuttenberg, within a short space of time, not fewer than sixteen hundred of them were thrust down alive into the shafts of the mines. In November, A D 1419, a Hussite minister was arrested, and his hands bored with a sword, and, by cords passed through the wounds, he was fastened to a tree, and burned alive.

Such barbarous usage, with repeated threats of utter extinction, provoked the Hussites at length to make a stand against their enemies. In the year 1419, a number of Roman Catholic priests, armed with offensive weapons, rushed into the churches of those who communicated in both kinds, and drove them out by violence. This induced the Hussite clergy to assemble their people, and to retire with them to a high hill, at the top of which was a fine tract of table land, where they erected a tent in form of a chapel, performed in it their public worship, and enjoyed the holy communion together. They called the place Mount Tabor, whence the refugees got the name of Taborites. When the secession became generally known in the neighbourhood, many like-minded brethren and sisters repaired to it. Here they assembled in distinct

companies for sermons, and celebrating of the Lord's supper. Upon one festival day, the number of communicants of both sexes exceeded forty-two thousand, all zealous Hussites, who abhorred the popish superstitions. They joined the Taborites; and all the Waldenses of Bohemia having been added to their number, they chose for their leader John Zisca, a Bohemian nobleman, who was totally blind. He had lost one eye in his childhood, and the other at the siege of the fortress of Raby, in the year 1420; but this did not hinder him from becoming a victorious leader of the Taborites. He was a brave general, though he did not always exhibit the moderation of a Christian. The emperor Sigismund, in the year 1421, led against him into Bohemia an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, who daily vociferated the name of *Huss* and *Heretics* on their march. Whenever a Bohemian was taken prisoner, even though he was no Hussite, he was hurried, without mercy, to the flames; for the imperial soldiers ignorantly regarded all Bohemians as heretics.

About this time, sixty reconnoitring dragoons treacherously seized Wenceslaus, the parochial minister of Arndostowicz, a pious man, who was generally beloved, together with his curate, under pretext that they were Hussites, and dragged them to the army. The commandant sent them to the bishop, and the latter remanded them to the general; and, after enduring severe treatment from one and the other, they were required to abjure their Hussite heresy upon pain of being burned alive. Wenceslaus, with modest frankness, replied, "This," (namely, the administration of the cup to the laity,) "is a part of the gospel ordinance; it was the manner of the primitive Christians, and is prescribed in your own missals. Erase it, then, from those missals, and cancel this part of the gospel!" Upon which one of the soldiers struck him on the face with his iron-gauntleted fist, and wounded him severely. The next day they took the pastor and his curate, with three elderly peasants, and four children, one of whom was seven years of age, another eight, and the other two eleven, who had shown great

stedfastness, and they placed them all upon a pile of fagots. The bystanders admonished them once more to abjure their heretical tenets, if they wished to save their lives; but Wenceslaus, as a faithful shepherd, replied, "Far be it from us to consent to your advice. We are ready to endure not only a single death, but a hundred, if it were possible, rather than deny a truth of the gospel which is as clear as the light of the sun." The executioners then came forward, and set fire to the pile. Wenceslaus took the children in his arms like a shepherd taking up his tender lambs, hugged them to his bosom, and sang with them a hymn of praise to God in the midst of the flames. The children were soon suffocated, and Wenceslaus himself, presently after, surrendered his spirit, as one who was faithful unto death, and about to receive the crown of life.

We attempt not to describe the wars in which the Taborites, under Ziska, engaged against the numerous imperial forces. It is astonishing what great and wonderful victories God granted them, and what terrors he injected into their enemies. Even popish writers have acknowledged that they could not comprehend how such large armies, composed of the very flower of Germany, should so often have been defeated, or rather should so often have betaken themselves to flight, frequently before they were in sight of a single opponent. One of them says, "The Bohemians have proved themselves a brave people; for, though the emperor Sigismund led nearly half Europe in arms against them, he was not able to reduce them." When we consider what fine and numerous troops the emperor marched into Bohemia, we cannot enough wonder how it was possible that a handful of rude Bohemians should have beaten them off, and prevented them from becoming masters of Prague; especially as the Bohemians, at the commencement, were not provided with military weapons, but met their enemies with threshing flails, and such-like instruments; so that the emperor despised them, and called them threshers. But the wounds they made with their flails were severe

and deep. Cardinal Julian, the pope's legate, was himself twice present, and saw the boldest princes and generals flee when none pursued them; nor could any entreaties, however urgent, prevail with them to look round and see that there was no enemy behind. He was likewise personally a spectator, when, halting at a certain spot, they summoned up courage enough to turn and look about them; but suddenly, at the mere report of the enemy's approach, they were panic struck, threw away their arms, and fled, leaving all behind them. Julian himself halted, burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Alas! it is not the enemy, but our sins which put us to flight!" The synod of Basle acknowledged the same thing, and declared that it must be from some secret judgment of God that the bravery of the Bohemians was not to be overcome by so many repeated attacks. Others ascribed these wonderful triumphs of the Taborites to witchcraft. But Philip Melancthon, one of the reformers of the next century, believed that the angels of God accompanied them, and terrified and dispersed their enemies.

After Zisca's death, the Taborites chose Procopius for their leader, who equally distinguished himself by his valour, but still could not obtain for the Taborites a free exercise of their religion. One chief cause of this was a division which had taken place among the Hussites themselves. The majority of them desired little more than that the laity should be allowed the use of the cup in the Lord's supper, which for some time had been restricted to the clergy alone; and this having been granted them, with some other less important concessions, by the council of Basle, between the years 1431 and 1443, they were contented. These were called Calixtines, or the "cup Christians." They afterwards found, by sad experience, that in such concessions they had been deceived, and that the promises made them were anything but sincere. But the pope's object was gained, which was to weaken the Hussites by dividing them. When the Calixtines had thus been persuaded to renounce their connexion with

the Taborites, the latter became prey to their enemies, and underwent severe trials. At length, in the year 1453, they obtained the free exercise of their religion from king George Podiebrad, built churches of their own, chose overseers, and held general synods to consider how they might conform their doctrine, life, and church discipline more agreeably to God's word, and restore everything to the simplicity and purity of the primitive apostolic church. Many also of the Calixtines, whose eyes were by this time opened, rejoined their community; and they were now distinguished by the general appellation of THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN.

About the year 1460, a new storm arose upon them. Many were burned alive, tortured upon the rack, torn limb from limb between horses driven opposite ways, and exposed in the fields in the depth of winter. Others were hung up with heavy weights suspended to their feet, and thus left to die with their limbs dislocated; and the extremities of others were mutilated. During this persecution, the brethren at Litiz sent emissaries everywhere to encourage the sufferers to faith and patience. For this purpose, Gregory, a nephew of the archbishop of Prague, one of the chief persecutors, came to that city, and assembled the brethren in a house, to celebrate with them the holy communion. The judge, who secretly favoured them, informed them by a private message that their enemies were on the watch, and advised them to flee. Gregory, too, was of opinion that Christians ought not to expose themselves unnecessarily to danger, and advised them not to wait even for necessary refreshments, but to escape at once. Most of them, however, replied, "No; he that believeth shall not make haste; let us be quiet, and await the event." Some students, who were present, boasted that the rack was no more to them than a breakfast, and the fire at the stake no more than a dinner. Thus delaying, they were suddenly seized. The judge called out at the door, "It is written, All who live godly must suffer persecution. Follow me, then, to prison, by order of the government."

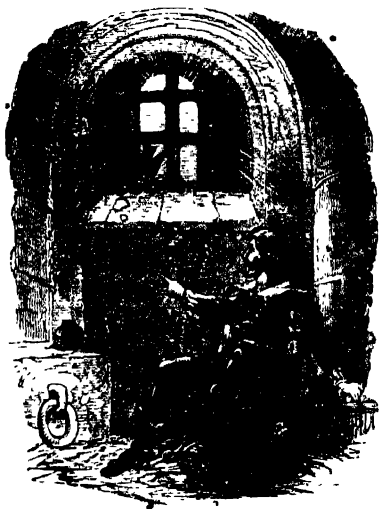
They were now to have been put to the torture : but nearly all who had boasted of their firmness denied their faith through fear of the rack ; while Gregory, who is called in history the patriarch of the brethren, remained undaunted. While undergoing the torture, he fainted away, and the bystanders believed him dead. His uncle, the archbishop, hastened to the prison, and bursting into tears at beholding his nephew in this condition, he exclaimed, " O my dear Gregory, would to God that my soul were in thy soul's stead ! " Gregory revived, and, at the archbishop's request, was released. He related, afterwards, that, in this state of unconsciousness, he saw a noble tree laden with beautiful fruit, upon which a multitude of sweetly singing birds were regaling, who seemed to be under obedience to a lovely youth who carried a wand. Three venerable persons stood by as watchers, whose features and form he recognized six years afterwards in the three worthies who were chosen to be the first bishops of the brethren.

This election took place in the year 1467, and was occasioned as follows. The brethren being very desirous to obtain fit persons to succeed their present ministers in the event of their departure, sent to consult the Waldensian churches, which were settled in the neighbouring country of Austria, and had bishops of their own. An assembly was convened at the village of Lhota, near the frontier, at which seventy persons, deputed from Bohemia and Moravia, consisting of priests, noblemen, learned persons, townsmen, and peasants, attended. They commenced their deliberations with fasting and prayer, and many tears ; and chose twenty persons, eleven of whom were to conduct the business of the meeting. They then prayed with one accord, that it might please the Lord to point out among the remaining nine those whom he had chosen to the oversight of his church in Bohemia. They sought the Divine decision upon this matter by lot, which was done by folding up twelve slips of paper separately, nine of them being blank, and three having the word, *Est*, " This is he," written on them. All

the twelve rolled slips of paper were then thrown promiscuously into an urn; and Gregory exhorted the people again to pray, that God of his special mercy would be pleased to select from the nine set before him, one, two, or three, to preside over his church. But should it be his will to approve of none of these, that he would be pleased to dispose that blank papers only should be drawn. While they thus fervently prayed together, a child drew out of the urn one paper after another, handing each to one of the nine persons. When these were all unfolded, it was found that the written ones belonged respectively to Matthias Convaldensis, Thomas Prizelaus, and Elias Chizenov, three distinguished men, and the very same whom Gregory had seen six years before while in his swoon. The church regarded this as the evident call of God. They then offered praise and thanksgiving; promised obedience to their bishops elect, and faithfulness to Christ; gave each other the right hand of fellowship, and obtained from the bishop of the Waldenses ordination for the three brethren, as bishops of the Bohemian church, with authority for them to ordain others as bishops and ministers. From that time they have usually been styled the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren, and their united churches, the United Church of the Brethren, or *Unitas Fratrum*.

Soon after this, another persecution was stirred up against those followers of Christ. The king, George Podiebrad, commanded them to be seized, and urged them to renounce their faith. The prisons in Bohemia, especially at Prague, were soon filled with them, and even their first bishop lingered in prison till the king's death, in 1471. Many died of starvation in prison, and others were subjected to a multiplicity of cruelties. The rest were compelled to take refuge in the depths of forests, or to secrete themselves in caverns and clefts of rocks during daylight. They were afraid to kindle any fires by day, lest the rising smoke should betray their haunts; so they lighted them at night, read their Bibles by them, and prayed. When snow

was on the ground, and they had to go out and hunt for sustenance, or to visit their brethren, they went singly in a line, so that every hinder person trod in the footsteps of the one who led the way; and the hindermost of all trailed a brush after him to erase the prints of their feet, and prevent suspicion that any one had been there, except some poor men to drag home a bundle of bushes from the thicket.



See p. 142.

During these troubles, Matthias Dolanscius, one of the brethren, was confined in prison at Prague, first for six years, and afterwards for four, on account of his profession of the gospel of Christ. Some good people contrived to convey him provisions for a while; among whom was a lady of rank, whose maid-servant was by his means converted to the knowledge of the truth.

But an order soon arrived, that nothing of the kind should be brought to him; and he would have been starved, had not God helped him in another way. For, happening to turn his eyes towards the window of his prison, he saw a jackdaw perched there with something in its beak. As Matthias approached, it flew away, but had dropped in the window a small shred of cloth wrapped together, in which he found a gold coin of just sufficient value to enable him to purchase what he wanted, till at the king's death he was set at liberty. Thus as the ravens fed Elijah by the brook Cherith, so can jackdaws convey sustenance to a Matthias Dolaneus in prison, when such is the will of God.

The persecution having ceased at the death of the archbishop, and of the king, George Podiebrad, the brethren had rest for a season under the new sovereign, Wladislaus of Poland. Of such peaceful intervals they used to avail themselves for the furtherance of the kingdom of God in every possible way. Thus they sent some from among them to obtain information respecting the state of Christ's kingdom upon earth, and to inquire abroad, whether anywhere Christians were to be found, who not only confessed Christ with their mouth, but also followed him in their lives; who adhered to the pure doctrine of God's word, and regarded the pope as Antichrist; in a word, any with whom they might be able to enter into brotherly fellowship, and from whose instructions and church usages they might learn how to amend and improve themselves. Their first mission of this kind was undertaken in the year 1474. Several persons of noble rank willingly bore the expenses, and obtained letters of safe conduct from the king. The messengers travelled through Poland to Constantinople. From thence they took separate routes. Lucas went to Greece and Italy; Maressa Cocovecius, through Scythia to Muscovy and other Slavonian provinces; Martin Caba-tuick took with him a Jew for his interpreter, and travelled through Palestine and Egypt; while Caspar Marcellus visited Thrace. They all reported, at their

return, that they had not discovered what they had sought, but had found the whole of Christendom in the most awful state of apostasy, so that it seemed as if Christians had everywhere agreed to abandon themselves to the very worst vices.

Upon this the brethren convened another synod for consulting what was to be done, in order to be free from the reproach of schism before God and their own consciences, and to bequeath a safe course to their descendants. It was at length resolved, in the year 1486, that "whenever God should raise up pious teachers and reformers to the church, in any part of the world, they would join and stand by them." But as no such teachers and reformers had yet appeared, within their knowledge, they sent, three years afterwards, the before-mentioned Lucas, accompanied by Thomas Germanus, to France and Italy, to inquire in those countries after any holy communities that might be secretly concerned about the truth. But these messengers found that the generality of Christians had fallen away from Christ in doctrine and practice; nevertheless they met with some who feared God, and who earnestly prayed to him under great tribulations and dangers; and with these they conferred respecting their faith, so as mutually to strengthen one another. They had the pain of personally witnessing some of these obscure and unobtrusive Christians betrayed and condemned to the fire, among whom was Jerome Savonarola, a witness of the truth in Italy. They visited next the Waldenses in France; and these, being pious people, recognized and treated them as brethren. At Rome, they saw things which they abhorred, and at which they shuddered. All this they reported at their return to the brethren in Bohemia, who were thus convinced that nothing remained to be done but to pray for all Christendom, and to continue patient and steadfast under every trial which their heavenly Father should suffer to come upon them.

During the peaceful times which God granted to the brethren's church, it continued to spread abroad, and

many of the nobility who joined them furnished them with houses of prayer on their estates. Fifty years had not elapsed since the solemn establishment of the brethren's union, and yet, in the year 1500, they could number about two hundred such places of worship. Their enemies, however, did not long remain quiet spectators of their prosperity, but, at the beginning of the following century, prevailed on the king of Bohemia to publish a decree of persecution against them. Although the decree was speedily revoked, the Diet again resolved on their destruction. The Romish bishops, in order to gain the king's consent, persuaded his queen that she would not be the mother of a living child, unless she rendered her assistance to the suppression of the Picards—a name then given to the brethren. The queen accordingly used all her influence; and the king, though he had not courage to refuse her, went into his private chamber, fell on his knees, and prayed with tears, that God would be pleased to bring this counsel to nought, forasmuch as he had no pleasure in shedding innocent blood. The enemies of the brethren exulted; but, behold how the matter ended! The queen, after enduring for several days the severest pangs of childbirth, died. The chancellor Colowrat, having left the Diet for Krupka, arrived there, and sent for the lord of Colditsch, to whom he related, in great glee, that the royal assent had been gained for getting rid of all the Picards. The lord of Colditsch asked his valet, who stood behind him, and who was one of the brethren, "Simon, what is your opinion? As all are so agreed, will it, think you, come to pass?" Simon answered, "There was one present when the decision was made, of whom I know not whether he has agreed to it, but nothing will come of it without his consent." The chancellor, who imagined the valet to be privy to some new conspiracy, broke out against him with harsh language, and angrily asked, "Who, then, is the person that dare oppose all the Estates of the real? He must certainly be some traitor and arch knave; one who deserves no

better than the Picards:" and he struck the table violently, imprecating that God would not suffer him to rise another morning alive and well, if a single Picard were suffered to live. The servant replied, with his hand solemnly pointing upwards, "There is One who dwelleth on high; if he has not consented to it, you may have decreed a purpose, but it will not stand." The chancellor said, "Knave, you shall soon know." He then arose from the table to depart for his castle. That very moment he felt an inflammation in his foot, which proved so violent, that the surgeons could do nothing to relieve him; it formed an abscess, and he died of it in a few weeks. The archbishop Bisek, on his way to Moravia, to publish there the king's decree, had taken medicine, which so excited him, that in leaping from his carriage, his foot caught and suspended him head foremost, which occasioned an internal injury, and his death. Another leading enemy of the brethren, Radozky, was travelling in a light sledge, with a sling and two spears at his side: the sledge making a violent plunge, he was overbalanced against one of the spears, which pierced him with great force, so that he died in three days. Another of them, Puta von Synichov, was at his castle at Raby; a heavy thunder-storm coming on, he ran affrighted into his chamber, locked the door, and remained there so long that his servants, being alarmed about him, knocked, but no one answered. They got a smith to open the door, and four of the principal persons proceeded to enter, but the two foremost instantly drew back, and ordered his coffin to be made, which was so secretly sealed up that no one knew exactly how he died. Baron von Neuhaus, another of their adversaries, falling from a hunting carriage, his spear wounded him so severely in the hip, that he died of it. Augustinus, a doctor of laws, who had endeavoured horribly to blacken the characters of the brethren in the eyes of the king and of the public by a libellous composition of his own, died at the same time suddenly, at Olmutz, while he was at supper. These sudden and awful

deaths of several of the most inveterate of the brethren's enemies occasioned a great and general sensation, so that it became a proverb, "If any one is tired of life, let him quarrel with the Picards, and he will not live another year."

The Bohemian Brethren's confession of faith agreed in general with that of the Waldenses. The same may be said of their ecclesiastical arrangements, in which they always sought to keep before them the primitive church, such as they considered it existed in the time of the apostles. They attached great importance to church discipline, to which every brother, whatever his rank, was required implicitly to submit. Private remonstrance, for lesser faults, was adopted by the lay brethren among themselves; but, when that was unavailing, the pastor interposed, and finally all the assembled elders. If the individual confessed his fault, he was dismissed with admonition, exhortation, and comfort; but refractory members were excluded from the Lord's table till they came to a better mind. Open and grievous offences were rebuked openly; the assembled pastors and elders represented to the offender the greatness of his offence before the whole church. Entire exclusion from the church was awarded only to the most scandalous conduct, or continued impenitence.

The excluded person was, however, by no means deprived of all hope of return; on the contrary, the church kept an open door for the sincere penitent. He was permitted to attend on the public preaching at the door of the church; and when the brethren perceived him sincerely returning to a Christian course, they received him with the greatest joy and love. The importance they attached to such a church discipline, was the chief cause why the Bohemian Brethren did not join the reformed churches, which God's mercy raised up in Germany at the commencement of the sixteenth century.

FOURTH PERIOD.

FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT PERIOD.

[A.D. 1517 to A.D. 1835.]

I.—THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND.

WHEN the long and dreary winter nights are passed, it often happens that the early month of March ushers in a few sun-shiny days, during which the snow dissolves, and the dull appearance of the fields is gradually exchanged for fresh and lively verdure; fragrant violets smile upon the sunny banks, and the buds begin to swell in the shrubberies and groves. Every creature seems to feel a delightful anticipation of approaching spring; but, suddenly, a driving north wind again covers the sky with dark frozen vapour, the fields are once more clothed in white shrouds, the nights are sharp and frosty, and the succeeding month of April looks sad, and brings with it chilling sleet and rain; and it is not till the more genial month of May that continual warm weather sets in, and introduces the fruitful summer. A similar vernal prematurity accompanied the labours of the excellent John Huss. Many longing souls in his days were ready to hail the near approach of better times; but the fields on which he had sown the good seed, had first to be drenched with storms of a hundred years, and the fulness of spring did not arrive till God, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, had raised up new witnesses, of whom the earliest and most important was the renowned MARTIN LUTHER.

He was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, on the 10th of November, 1483. As he discovered good abilities, his father, Hans Luther, a poor miner of the village of Mora, near Eisenach, sent him to the school of this

town, where he with difficulty gained subsistence by singing at the doors of the inhabitants, till a pious woman took him into her family. In the year 1501, he went to the university of Erfurt, and four years afterwards he entered the convent of the Augustine monks in that city, with a view to serve God more devoutly. Here he experienced great depression of mind, with severe spiritual conflict, being in bondage to the notion that we must be saved by our own righteousness; but, by the advice of an aged brother monk, who directed him to the free grace of God in Christ, and by his own diligent study of the Scriptures, his spirit received light from above, and that cheerful faith which never left him. In the year 1508, he was appointed professor in the new high school of Wittenberg, and delivered lectures with great acceptance.

But God had appointed him to spend his days, not in quiet employments, but in almost perpetual conflicts in the cause of religion, which commenced in the year 1517. At this time the popish traffic in *indulgences* had reached its height. A Dominican monk, named Tetzel, was travelling in Germany, and furthering this abuse with the utmost effrontery. By payment of money any one could obtain a letter of indulgence; that is, a written or printed assurance of the remission of sins. Money was the great object of the pope and his agent; and the deluded people readily submitted to be imposed upon by Tetzel, in every way. Intelligent persons saw through the abominable cheat, but few ventured to speak out, because Tetzel was under the protection of the pope. John, the bishop of Meissen, observing how eagerly people flocked to the monk, and paid their money for indulgences, said, "What fools men are, to commit their money to a chest of which another keeps the key!" And a Franciscan monk, preaching at Cologne, desiring to expose this impious absurdity, exclaimed, "My brethren, I will tell you of a new wonder; it is this: If any one of you have half a florin in your pockets, you may purchase an indulgence to take you to heaven; and, if you have no

more than a quarter of a florin, you can still purchase half a share in the heavenly kingdom; but, if you have no money at all, then you must go to the devil! Now, is it not a new wonder, indeed, that without money none can be saved?" When Tetzel was come to Wittenberg, and had set up his retail traffic there, Luther could no longer silently behold the flagitious imposture; but, on the 31st of October, 1517, posted up against the door of the castle church at Wittenberg, ninety-five theses. They consisted chiefly of objections against indulgences; and Luther declared himself ready to dispute publicly upon them with any man.

It is related, that, previously to this, the elector Frederic of Saxony had dreamed three different times, that Almighty God sent to him a monk, attended by all the blessed saints as his companions, and as witnesses of his mission; "and God," relates the prince, "commanded me to allow this monk to affix a writing upon the chapel doors of my castle at Wittenberg, and assured me that I should not have to repent of it. I then signified to the monk that he was at liberty to write whatever God had commanded him. The monk began to write at Wittenberg, and in such large characters, that I could read the writing at this distance at Schweidnitz, (twenty-four miles from Wittenberg,) and he had such a long pen in his hand, that its upper end reached as far as Rome, and went into the ear of a lion that was couched in the middle of that city, and brushed against the pope's triple crown, so that it began to totter, and was just ready to fall from his head. At this the lion roared so tremendously, that people ran together from every quarter to learn what was the matter, and the pope sent me a message to beware of the monk, for that he resided in my own dominions. We toiled hard to shatter the gigantic pen of this monk; but the more we laboured, the more did it stiffen and creak, as if it had been made of iron, so that the very noise seemed to pierce my ears, and quite disturb me. At length, being weary of our vain efforts to break it, we desisted, for we now supposed the monk to be

more than a common man; however, I asked him how he came by his strong pen. He replied, that it was plucked from the wing of a Bohemian goose* which lived a hundred years ago; and was so strong, because there was a spirit in it, of which it could not be deprived, and a life which could not be drawn from it. Soon after this, a shout was heard, announcing, that from the long quill pen had been produced innumerable other quill pens, which in time would become as large and as strong as itself. And just when I had resolved to enter into closer conversation with the monk, I awoke, and immediately wrote down the dream that I might the better remember it."

The interpretation of his dream is easy. It began to be fulfilled the very day that Luther posted up his theses. Who could have thought that such a simple document would draw after it so great a work as that of the Reformation, and render the year 1517 such an important epoch? Within fourteen days after it was posted up, copies of it had been circulated throughout Germany, and within six weeks, had found their way through many parts of England, exciting everywhere the greatest attention, and coming to the hands of many who were already prepared to listen to such new and bold language.

A variety of circumstances had concurred to prepare

* Referring to the well-known prediction uttered by John Huss. The word *Huss* (pronounced Hoose) signifies *goose* in the Bohemian dialect; as the word *Wus* (pronounced Woose) does in that of Swabia. Luther himself refers to it in the following words:—"The blessed John Huss predicted of me in a letter which he sent to Bohemia, from his prison at Constance; 'they are now going to broil a goose, but within a hundred years they shall hear a swan sing, whom they must suffer to live.' Then be it so," added Luther, "if God will." In the Prague library is preserved a splendid copy of the Gospels, as used in the church of the Hussites, embellished with richly coloured drawings, in one of which Wickliff is represented striking fire with a flint and steel, Huss lighting a little heap of wood, and Luther holding a blazing torch.

the way for the Reformation. The seeds of knowledge had been widely scattered by thousands of Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Bohemian Brethren, dispersed in the different countries, and many eyes had been thus opened to the sad declension of the church. Preaching in the vernacular tongues had become more frequent. Attention to general science, and to the original languages of the Old and New Testaments, was on the increase. Men of learning and wit had begun to expose the ignorance and immorality of the secular and regular clergy; and the grand engine for quickly and plentifully communicating such writings to the people at large, and for thus undermining the undue ascendancy of the clergy, had existed for half a century; an engine of such great importance, that it served above all others to accelerate the Reformation, and without which the Reformation could never have been accomplished as it was. That engine was **THE PRESS, OR THE ART OF PRINTING.**

The Brahmins of India have a proverb, "Blessings on the memory of him who invented writing!" and when we consider the importance of the art of printing—an art so simple, though for so many ages unknown—we may well apply this proverb to its inventor. He is said to have been John von Guttenberg, of Mayence, assisted by John Fust and Peter Schöffer. The first book printed by them was the Psalter, in the year 1457. Fust, or Faustus, having printed a considerable number of copies of the Bible, went to Paris, where the art of printing was still unknown. His selling his copies for sixty crowns each, while the transcribers charged five hundred, created universal astonishment; and when it was found that as fast as he sold one he produced another, all Paris was soon in a stir, and the people were still more astonished that one copy so exactly resembled another. He was, therefore, accused of dealing in magic; his house was searched, and a very considerable store of Bibles found in it was seized. Judgment was then solemnly pronounced on him as a confederate of the devil; and the red ink,

with which his volumes were ornamented, ^{and} ~~was~~ affirmed to be his blood. But upon his ~~dis~~^{re}vealing the secret of his art, the parliament of Paris set him at liberty.

The Latin Bible was first printed in 1462, and the first German Bible in the year 1467. Twenty years afterwards, there were presses in almost all the principal towns, and soon thousands of books were in the hands of the people, and what had hitherto been monopolized by only a few of the learned, became the common property of all Christendom. Heretofore, when the pope, in 1228, published his first decree against the circulation of the Scriptures, the prohibition little affected the lower classes; for the enormous prices of a single manuscript Bible, as already noticed, made it impossible for them to purchase one; and the poor Waldenses were the only exceptions to this, as they were able to transcribe and multiply copies for themselves. But now, when a Bible could be obtained at so low a price, all Christendom were too eagerly desirous of the sacred volume to be deterred by the pope's prohibition from purchasing and reading it. One thing only was still wanted in Germany, namely, a good, plain, accurate translation of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue; which, however, the progress of the Reformation soon effected.

The great attention which Luther's ninety-five theses everywhere attracted, and the hearty welcome proclaimed to them from so many quarters, could not fail to disquiet the pope, who consequently sent Luther an injunction to recant them. Luther, though he still retained great respect to the pope's authority, refused. He desired that it should be first proved from Scripture that he was in error, and declared that he could acknowledge no authority in matters of faith but the word of God only. The pope would not listen to a poor Augustine monk; and finding all milder persuasions unavailing, he excommunicated Luther, in the year 1520. The latter, who had meanwhile been acquiring additional knowledge, now fully perceived that the word of God is the immovable ground

and rock of the church, and that upon this rock the pope himself had his footing. He, therefore, determined solemnly to renounce popery altogether, and on the 10th of December, 1520, he burned the bull which the pope had sent to announce his excommunication, together with the book of canon law, before the gate of Wittenberg, in the presence of a numerous body of students and others.



Having thus passed the rubicon, Luther not only could no longer recede, but made rapid aggressions upon popery. In the year 1521, he was summoned to the Diet of Worms, there to undergo examination before the emperor. The example of Huss was no very encouraging recollection, and many warnings were given him against attending to the summons;

nevertheless, Luther remained undaunted. As he rode through Erfurt, on his way to the Diet, multitudes assembled to get a sight of him, and the streets, windows, and roofs were thronged with spectators. When reminded afresh at this town, like Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem, of the great personal danger that awaited him, he replied, "If they could kindle a fire between Wittenberg and Worms that should reach to heaven, I would show myself there in the name of the Lord." Just before he entered Worms, he replied to a similar warning, "I am called to Worms, and to Worms I must go; and were there as many devils in that city as there are tiles upon the houses, still I would enter it."

When Luther was required at the Diet to recant his writings, and was desired to give a decisive answer upon the subject, he said, with a loud and firm tone, "I neither can nor will recant anything, unless refuted out of the Holy Scriptures, or by open and clear argument; for it is neither beneficial nor safe to do anything contrary to one's conscience. Here I stand; I cannot act otherwise than I do—God help me! Amen."

Much as Luther's friends, and especially his sovereign, the elector Frederic of Saxony, admired this bold confession, Luther was declared a heretic by the emperor Charles v., and put under the ban of the empire. Charles, however, kept his word of safe conduct, suffering him to return home unmolested. But as Luther, on the 4th of May, 1521, was on the road from Mora, he was surprised by several masked horsemen, who took him from his carriage, mounted him on horseback, and galloped off with him. They hastened across the country through thicket and forest, till they arrived at Wartburg, near Eisenach, about eleven o'clock at night. These troopers had been commissioned by the elector Frederic to convey Luther to a place of safety, as he wished to keep him there till the violence of the storm was abated. Luther was detained at the castle of Wartburg like a noble

prisoner of war, and went by the name of Squire George, having to let his beard grow in the lay fashion of the times, and to wear a sword like a knight or country gentleman.

Luther could not spend his time here in indolence; he had made a beginning to build up the fallen church, and was determined to proceed with it. He resolved, therefore, upon making an accurate translation of the Bible in good plain German; for he well knew that this would be one of the best means of showing the public how far the Romish church had departed from the simplicity and purity of apostolic times, and of reviving religious knowledge and the true fear of God. He cheerfully set about a work, which at that time was of no small difficulty, especially as at Wartburg, which he called his Patmos, he was without books of reference. Still, by the help of God, he soon completed his valuable translation of the New Testament, which has ever since been regarded as a treasure of the German church not to be surpassed. He wrote, besides, his book of comments on the portions of the Epistles and Gospels appointed to be read in churches, which, under the Divine blessing, has proved very useful ever since. It has been computed, that a person, spending ten hours a day in only transcribing Luther's works, would require a period as long as the common life of man for the purpose; and yet, besides these literary labours, Luther went through an amount of exertion in active life, which it would not be very easy to equal. After he had been ten months at Wartburg, he heard of grievous disturbances among his followers at Wittenberg, and could no longer contain himself in his retirement, but, without asking leave of the elector, hastened to Wittenberg, restored order there, and, with the assistance of some of his learned friends, proceeded with indefatigable zeal to translate the Old Testament; so that, in the year 1534, the whole of the Scriptures were printed in the German language, in a single volume. The most distinguished of his assistants in this work, and indeed of his fellow

labourers in general, was Philip Melancthon, who was born at Bretten, in 1497, in a district of the Palatinate now belonging to Baden. He was a man of remarkable learning and piety, whose meekness and gentleness were often of great service in keeping Luther within the bounds of moderation in controversies. It was common for his scholars to write down what he dictated or delivered in lectures, so that he only had to read over what they had written, and this explains why his writings are so voluminous, while his life was so active.

The new but scriptural doctrine which Luther preached was soon spread abroad by his numerous writings, especially by his larger and lesser catechisms and hymns, as also by his disciples and friends. Within the space of little more than three years, his works were translated into the Spanish language; and within four years, a traveller purchased some of them at Jerusalem. Every where the decision was either for the pope or for Luther; and, as early as the year 1519, a papal legate, passing through Germany, remarked, that he found, wherever he went, three on the side of Luther to one on that of the pope. A disciple of Luther's, who preached "the new," that is, the scriptural "doctrine," in a town at Saxony, wrote, that he was unable to express how ardently and attentively people received the word; how willingly they were led on; that he had often to weep for joy to think how they endured and loved so weak and insignificant a teacher as himself. Wherever popish adversaries hindered the admission of one Lutheran minister, the people flocked to the nearest town, though miles distant, to hear another. At Zwickau, Gabriel Didymus was minister; and, though he had but a weak voice, yet the hearers crowded round the pulpit, and listened to him for nearly a whole day together. At Annaberg, both Leidenmann and Myconius preached to very large multitudes. And when Luther delivered his first discourse at Leipsic, the people were so affected by it, that they all fell on their

knees, and thanked God for such a word as this. And even Cochläus; a rabid opposer of Luther, relates that women at their spinning wheels had the New Testament open before them, and read passages of it to the monks who gathered round them, and so confounded them, that they took care never to enter their houses again.

The reformation of the church in Saxony was happily completed under the elector John. Luther travelled about the country, collected congregations in the churches, put questions to them concerning their faith, and instructed them in the evangelical doctrine and improved discipline of the reformed religion. We may easily suppose that he found some like the inhabitants of Jacobshagan, where, upon the bailiff of the village, at the visitation, using the popish language respecting the blessed virgin, in his confession of faith, the rest of the villagers said, "We believe as our bailiff believes." But additional light found its way gradually among them; convents were deserted and dissolved, abuses rectified, and worthy ministers of the gospel appointed. This was also the case in Hesse, about the year 1526, when the landgrave Philip welcomed the reformation with great zeal. And soon most of the provinces and towns of Germany were enlightened with sound doctrine. On the 4th of May, 1526, the princes who favoured the Reformation concluded, at Torgau, a defensive league and covenant against the enemies of the Lutheran doctrine; and, on the 19th of April, 1529, they published their solemn *Protestation* against the decisions of the Diet of Spire, which had condemned them without a hearing; whence originated the name of *Protestants*.

The Protestant princes and estates delivered at the Diet of Augsburg, on the 25th of June, 1530, that profession of faith now known by the name of the AUGSBURG CONFESSION, in favour of which three electoral princes, twenty dukes and princes, twenty-four counts,

four barons, and thirty-five free imperial towns, declared themselves, some at the time when it was drawn up, and others afterwards; and liberty of belief was finally conceded to them, in the year 1532.

Luther did not live to see the time when war was deemed requisite for the secure establishment of the Protestant church; he died at Eisleben, his native town, on the 18th of February, 1546, stedfast in the faith which he had preached. His last words were, "Father, into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth," *Psa. xxxi. 5*. He was a man of extraordinary firmness and perseverance, combined with great kindness of heart. In the presence of princes and nobles he was firm as a rock; among children he was simple-hearted as a child. He was such a master of his native language, particularly as spoken by the common people, that in this respect he excelled all who had gone before him, and perhaps all who have succeeded him: his understanding was matured and very comprehensive; his spirit ardent, but gentle and tender; his industry was unbounded. To an heroic and impregnable faith in the word of God, with which he met all persons and all dangers, he added the most simple and childlike humility before his Maker and Redeemer; and the crowning excellence of his doctrine, which has ever since remained invaluable to the real Protestant church, was, that it went to destroy, root and branch, all confidence in our own righteousness; instead of which it recommended faith in the free grace of God in Christ Jesus, as the ground of a sinner's justification. Luther's name and works will never be forgotten, as long as there are Christians in Germany, willing to be led by the word of God, the only sure guide to the believer.

Immediately after Luther's death, war broke out, the emperor Charles v. having resolved to attempt the suppression of Protestantism. He was successful in the outset, having taken the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse prisoners, and afterwards harassed

the Protestants of Germany with the INTERIM, a sort of compromise between Romanism and Lutheranism; but the elector Maurice of Saxony finally defeated his designs, and he was obliged to concede to the Protestants full liberty of belief, by the treaty of Passau, in 1552, and by an accommodation of religious differences, ratified at Augsburg, in 1555.

One instance of the great perplexity and oppression to which Protestants at this period were subjected, we will notice in the case of John Brentius, the Wurtemberg reformer. He was pastor of a congregation at Hall, a free imperial town of Swabia, when the emperor's troops marched thither, in the year 1547. He went to the general, and requested that his family, as that of a clergyman, might enjoy the usual exemption from quartering the military, and ordered his domestics to keep the house carefully closed during his absence. But Spanish soldiers surrounded it, and knocked violently with their halberds at the door, demanding admittance. Brentius returned; and one of the soldiers pointing his halberd at his breast, threatened to kill him unless he caused the door to be opened immediately. Brentius did so, and spread a table of provisions before them; meanwhile he secreted his papers, sent away his family, and quitted the house. Every thing in it was at the disposal of the soldiers; but, the next day, a Spanish bishop came and turned them out, quartered there himself, rummaged the library, and found some letters which Brentius had neglected to destroy, and which contained reference to the war; and as it was known that Brentius had frequently exhorted the inhabitants to stand courageously upon the defence of their faith, an order was issued for his arrest. He took refuge on the top of a high tower, where he remained concealed for a time, and then escaped from the town in disguise. He wandered in miserable clothing through the neighbouring forests in a cold winter night, and did not return to his own empty dwelling-house till after the imperial troops had left the town.

On entering his house he found every thing gone;

and the imperial minister, Granya, soon sent a commissioner to Hall, to convey Brentius to him, dead or alive. This man, immediately upon his arrival, found his way to Brentius, and addressing him in a very friendly manner, endeavoured to get him into his power, that he might carry him off privately. But not succeeding in his purpose, he tried another method, by procuring a meeting of the town council, and taking an oath of them that none of their number should divulge what he was about to disclose to them in the name of the emperor. He then informed them of his special commission, and threatened them with the emperor's displeasure, unless they should aid and assist him in executing it. Happily, however, one of the members of the council, named Büschler, did not come in till after the oath had been administered, though soon enough to overhear the commissioner's proposal. He wrote instantly on a slip of paper, "Fly, Brentius, with all speed!" and despatched it to Brentius, who having just sat down to his humble meal, upon receiving the note, rose up immediately to quit the town. A thick forest in the neighbourhood served for his abode by day; and every night he repaired to his family, whom he had lodged in the next village. At break of day he returned regularly to his station in the forest.

In this manner Brentius spent several weeks, while the Spanish military again plundered his house. After this he sent a message to the inhabitants of Hall, that he was prepared to return to them as their minister, if they would venture to countenance him. But their reply was, that they could not protect him from the emperor, and that he had better seek another situation. Ulrich, duke of Wurtemberg, then took the worthy exile under his patronage, desiring his secretary to convey Brentius to a place of security. "But," he added, "do not inform me where you have lodged him, that I may be able, if required, to tell the emperor upon oath, that I know not the place of his concealment." Brentius was accordingly removed to a se-

questered valley in a mountainous district, where he resided in the castle of Wittlingen, and wrote his commentary on the twenty-third Psalm. He was no sooner gone, than a commissioner arrived from the emperor, and demanded immediate admission and right of search in the castle of Wurtemberg. The steward of the castle, who was a pious man, and was often visited by the neighbouring clergy, had been the innocent occasion of the report that Brentius was secreted there. Ulrich inquired of his secretary if Brentius was there, and when he replied in the negative, the duke ordered the castle to be thrown open. The commissioner carefully searched the place throughout, but discovered nothing to warrant suspicion.

Brentius, finding himself unsafe in Wurtemberg, fled; with the duke's permission, to Basle, by the way of Strasburg and Mompelgard; and resided unmolested in that city for a time, recruiting himself from his troubles, and writing his commentary on Isaiah. But new trials soon awaited him. His wife, whom he had left at Stuttgart, having died, his care for his children induced him to return thither. As cardinal Granvella had spies in his employ, in consequence of their information, a troop of Spanish dragoons made their appearance one evening at Munich; and their commandant immediately announced himself to the elector, and was invited to his table, where, before the company present, he made no secret of his having a sealed order from the emperor to the duke of Wurtemberg, to deliver up Brentius to him, dead or alive. An aunt of the duchess of Wurtemberg happening to be there, immediately left the room unobserved, wrote to her nephew, the duke Ulrich, at Stuttgart, of what he had to expect, and despatched the letter the same night by a private messenger, with orders to go as quickly as possible, and to return by another road, that he might not meet the soldiers, and be intercepted. Duke Ulrich sent instantly for Brentius, and desired him not to utter a word of reply to what he was going to say.

He then read to him the letter from Munich, bade him escape, and conceal himself as well as he could, but said he would know nothing further about him at the present, that he might be able to assert upon oath that he was ignorant of the place of his concealment. Brentius went back to his house, and furnishing himself with a single loaf of bread, left his home without speaking to any one, and went into the upper town. Here he entered the first house he found open,* went unobserved up stairs to the top of the house just under the roof, where he crept on his hands and knees between the roof and a pile of fagots, and took up his lodgings in a corner behind it. The next day the military commissioner entered Stuttgard with his troopers, placed a guard at the city gates, and another at the castle, and delivered his commission. The duke assured him he had no knowledge of Brentius's place of concealment, and gave him free leave to search, and take him, dead or alive. The officer then commenced a search of every house in Stuttgard, and all beds, chests, wood piles, stacks, and hay-lofts were ransacked by his Spanish soldiers, with their sabres and spears. The search occupied fourteen days; and Brentius could overhear people every day talking in the street about the direction the search was taking, and could very sincerely accord with what he heard the women in the streets say to one another, morning after morning, "Thank God, they have not got him yet." At length, on the fourteenth day, the soldiers came to the house where he was. Brentius, on his knees in prayer, heard the clatter of their sabres, and their noisy language, as they searched from room to room, and from one story to another, till they came up to his own loft; and what were his sensations when he heard the spears thrust through the wood pile that concealed him, and when

* This was the "Landhaus," as it is called; for it is still standing. It was afterwards used by the reformed as a place of worship.

he even h shrink aside from one of the thrusts! When they had thus rammaged everywhere, he heard the command, "Leave; he is not here." The commissioner was satisfied that Brentius was not in the town, and marched away. But the most remarkable circumstance in this account we have not noticed, namely, how Brentius sustained himself during these fourteen days. As a jackdaw was the instrument of Divine help to Matthias Dolanscius, in his dungeon at Prague, so a hen was made of the same use to John Brentius. She came the very first day at noon to a spot near his feet, laid an egg, and then went away quietly; without



uttering that particular natural cry of the hen, which seems intended to discover where she has deposited her egg, and which, in the present case, might have proved fatal to good Brentius. He received the egg as sent him from God, and ate it with a piece of his bread. The fowl resorted to the same spot daily, and laid her egg; and thus was Brentius daily supplied

But the day the Spanish soldiers left the town, she did not come; and Brentius heard people in the street say, "They have marched off." Therefore, in the evening, he went directly to the duke, whose surprise at beholding him, and at hearing his account of himself, it is easy to imagine. But the duke acknowledged to the reformer that he was no longer able to protect him in his public capacity, and therefore made him his upper bailiff at Hornberg, where he continued unmolested, and went by the name of Huldreich Ingster for two years, after which, the general treaty of Passau set him at liberty. He then resumed his ministerial functions with eminent usefulness, and was the principal leader of the Reformation in Württemberg.

It is a common saying, that misfortunes never come single. It may with at least equal truth be affirmed, that one good gift of God seldom comes without another. At the very time when the Almighty was distinguishing Luther as his powerful champion in Saxony, he raised up in Switzerland another worthy witness of the truth, who commenced the Reformation in that country. This was Ulric Zwingli, a pastor of Zurich, a man of ability and learning, of real piety and courageous zeal. Like Luther, he had been brought to the knowledge of the truth through studying the Scriptures, and, like him also, he was first excited to oppose the prevalent abuses of the church by the sale of indulgences. Zwingli accorded with Luther, except in being rather more strenuous and prompt in ridding the church of its Romish ceremonies. He agreed with him in the removal of all old abuses and erroneous doctrines, but in the settlement of a reformed system of doctrine they came to a point upon which they could not unite, namely, the doctrine of the Lord's supper, which Zwingli considered only a feast commemorative of Christ's death, but Luther believed it also to be a means of verily and indeed partaking of his body and blood. This difference between them could never be adjusted, and occasioned a total divi-

sion of their followers into two parties, which have ever since borne the respective names of Lutheran and Reformed. It is to be lamented, that two men so clear-sighted in other respects, and so distinguished as chosen instruments of benefit to the Christian church, could not unite entirely in their views of the truth, and prosecute their great work together. How much harm, which at that time was unforeseen, might thus have been prevented!

Between the years 1520 and 1525, the Reformation at Zurich was fully established. Berne, Basle, and Schaffhausen, followed the example of Zurich, in 1528 and 1529; and more than half of Switzerland soon after declared for the reformed church. This subject would supply much interesting narrative, did the limits of our little work allow it; one event, however, we cannot omit to notice. When the doctrines of the Reformation had spread from Zurich into the lesser cantons of Switzerland, the inhabitants of the small town of Weser showed a disposition to abandon the errors of popery, and to receive the reformed religion. But as the government of the canton of Schwyz, to which this little town belonged, continued hostile to the Reformation, they sent a public officer to Weser, to prohibit the adoption of the new doctrine. The inhabitants replied, that they were willing to render due obedience in all other matters, but in that of religion they were responsible only to God. Hereupon, some boys brought the images of the saints out of the parish church, in the presence of the commissioner, set them up in the cross-way, and said to them, "This is the way to Schwyz; that is the way to Glarus; this is the way to Zurich; and this is the way to Chur: now take which way you please, and be gone, like good boys; but, if you do not choose to go by one road or the other, we will burn you." The images, showing no readiness to depart from their old residence by either of these roads, were thrown into a bonfire by the boys, and burned.

Zwingle lost his life in the Swiss religious war in 1531, having attended the army to the field of battle, not as a commander, like many Romish prelates, but as military chaplain. John Ecolampadius, his faithful brother reformer, who was a native of Weinsberg, in Swabia, and minister of a church at Basle, died the same year. Immediately before his death, he laid his hand upon his heart, and exclaimed, "There is abundance of light here." He then repeated the 45th Psalm, adding, "Help me, Christ Jesus!" and with these words expired.

After Zwingle's death, the Swiss Reformation was continued by the famous John Calvin, at Geneva, a man of great sagacity and decision, to whom the reformed churches in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and Scotland, are under deep obligations. He was concerned particularly to settle a pure form of ecclesiastical polity and discipline, and he laid the foundation of great good by his commentary on the Scriptures. The divinity school of Geneva became, by his means, the nursery of numerous ministers, who spread his principles abroad in other countries. Philip Melancthon, Luther's coadjutor, who was called *Præceptor Germaniæ*, "the instructor of Germany," had to go through much acrimonious controversy on various subjects after Luther's decease, and died, worn out with his labours, on the 19th of April, 1562, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. In his last moments he raised himself on his bed, and exclaimed, "If God be for us, who can be against us!" Being asked if he wished for anything, he answered, "Only to get to heaven!" and thus he yielded up his spirit.

As the papal power could do nothing upon a large scale to obstruct the rapid progress of the Reformation, it spent its inveterate hatred of the truth upon individual Protestants, and thus called forth a display of the triumphant power of that gospel for which they sacrificed their lives. Thus John Heuglin, of Lindau; who was burned alive at Constance, on hearing his

sentence of death, exclaimed, "May God forgive you! for ye know not what ye do." Leonard Kaiser, a young evangelical minister, was burned at Scherding, in Bavaria, and died with great courage. In the Netherlands, two women were buried alive for their attachment to evangelical truth, and cheerfully submitted to their fate. Henry Van Zutphen, in Dithmarsch, showed extraordinary patience in his cruel death. And the two earliest martyrs of Lutheran doctrine, Henry Voes and John Nesse, young Augustine monks, who, after a long imprisonment, were burned alive, evinced admirable stedfastness. When the fire was kindled about them, one of them said, "This is the day we have been long wishing for, that we might be quite present with the Lord." They sang the *Te Deum* responsively at the fire; and exclaimed several times amidst the flames, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on us!" Luther composed a beautiful hymn upon their death.

II.—THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

It has been truly said, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church; and this may partly explain how Christianity came to flourish so much in England; for, at the Reformation, there was no lack of the blood of martyrs in this country. Perhaps in no other Protestant country was the reformation from papal errors and abuses ever more perseveringly contested than in England, where for such a length of time, from the days of Wickliff to those of Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Bradford, and Jewel, there had been many a promising appearance of the dawn of a better day. We have already noticed Wickliff. His translation of the Scriptures was of great value for the times he lived in; but as none, except the rich, were able to purchase

a manuscript Bible, the bulk of the people still remained in the most profound ignorance. One of the earliest attempts to communicate religious knowledge to the common people, was the *Biblia Pauperum*, or "Poor Man's Bible," which appears to have been printed about the year 1420. It consists of forty wood cuts, for the art of printing with types was then unknown. Each of these cuts is divided into three compartments, each representing a portion of Scripture history, imperfectly designed and rudely executed; with a text, or a few words, showing what was meant by it. Thus persons who could not purchase larger works were enabled to get some knowledge of a few Scripture facts. Copies of the work still exist; and that our readers may have a better idea of it, we will give a description of one page. In the middle compartment, the Redeemer is represented conferring the crown upon one who has just departed this life in his fear and love; on the left hand is the daughter of Zion, crowned at her espousals, as mentioned in the Canticles; on the right is the angel conversing with St. John in the Apocalypse. In the upper compartment are two half length figures representing David and Isaiah, and two Scripture texts, one from Solomon's Song, v. 7, 8: the other from Rev. xxi. 9. Above are some other brief inscriptions. All the copies of this work which are now met with appear to have been much used, and are generally imperfect. Defective as this mode of teaching must have been, various circumstances show that it was very acceptable at the time. In England, many copies of portions of the Scriptures, in the language of the people, were handed about privately in manuscript, which also may be one reason why a printed English Bible was longer in appearing. Though the Italian version of the Scriptures appeared in print as early as the year 1471, the Flemish in 1475, the Spanish in 1478, and the Bohemian in 1488, the first printed English Bible was much later: indeed, the New Testament was all that

first made its appearance, and this at Antwerp, by William Tindal, in 1526. Severe measures were used to prevent its introduction into England, so that any person who imported or sold it in this country was condemned to ride backwards on a horse, through the streets of London, with the Testament belted to his waist, and the books were then burned. Tindal himself was treacherously arrested, thrown into prison, and, in the year 1536, strangled and burned at Flanders. Just before his death, he fervently ejaculated several times, "Lord! Lord! open the king of England's eyes!" His two coadjutors were likewise burned, one in England, the other in Portugal.

While the German Reformation was proceeding as before mentioned, Henry VIII. (who died in 1547) swayed the English sceptre. He was an arbitrary and tyrannical monarch, who renounced his connexion with the pope chiefly because the latter would not sanction his divorce from queen Catherine of Arragon. But he did not renounce the principles and tenets of popery itself; he merely found it more convenient to be absolute in church affairs than to listen to the dictation of a foreigner; and the very same spirit made him look with a jealous eye upon the great influence which the writings of Luther obtained in England at that period: hence no effectual reformation was suffered to take place in his reign, though very much was done in progress towards it. And thus more was done in that of his immediate successor, the youthful Edward VI., who, with the assistance of Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, and of some German reformers, brought forward an improved order of things in England. Cranmer and Ridley drew up a public confession of the reformed faith, at first consisting of forty-two articles, which afterwards, in the reign of Elizabeth, were reduced to those thirty-nine that constitute, to this day, the acknowledged confession of the English episcopal church. But just in the midst of these preparations for renovating the church of England, king

Edward died, and was succeeded by *Henry*, a decided and bigoted papist, who immediately put a stop to the innovations, and in whose short reign of four years, nearly three hundred persons were burned alive for their adherence to the doctrines of the Reformation. Among them were John Hooper, Hugh Latimer, Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, John Rogers, and many other distinguished worthies. Others fled to Germany, became connected with John Calvin, and afterwards founded that puritan church communion in England, which acknowledged neither the English liturgy nor episcopal government. The English Church establishment became firmly settled under the auspices of the next sovereign, queen Elizabeth, who was friendly to the Reformation and to the spread of evangelical truth, and thus was the Reformation established throughout England. We will now relate a few particular instances of the conflict between popery and the reformation in that country.

A Romish priest once said to Tindal, "Better live without God's law, than without that of the pope;" he answered, "I defy the pope and all his laws; and, if God spare my life, I shall one day see ploughboys better acquainted with the Scriptures than I am at present, though I have been at the university; and am in holy orders."

A pious man, named John Brown, a Lollard, was sailing in a barge up the Thames from Gravesend, and, in conversation with a priest who sat beside him, he acknowledged that he read the New Testament. He also said some things against the mass. A few days after this, as Brown was sitting with his family and a few friends at dinner, some officers came in, and took him away to prison, and his friends were not suffered to know whither they had conveyed him. In prison, his bare feet were set over a fire, by command of the popish prelates, Warham and Fisher, in the hope that they should thus compel him to renounce his faith. But he was so strengthened, that

he endured the torment with firmness and patience. About two months after his arrest, his maid-servant found him one evening placed in the stocks in his native town, with both his feet burned to the bones, and learned that he was to be burned alive at the stake the next morning. His wife came to him, and sat up with him that night. He told her all he had suffered, and entreated her to continue to bring up their children in the fear of God. He was burned the next day. His last words were, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!"

In the year 1519, seven martyrs were burned at Coventry, six men and one woman. They were apprehended on Ash Wednesday, upon a charge of having taught their children the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments, in English. They were brought to the Abbey of Maxtock, six miles from Coventry, while their children were detained in the Grey Friars' convent of that city. The warden of the convent, whose name was Stafford, questioned the children about the instruction they had received from their parents; and warned them, if they did not wish to die in the same manner, never more to use the Lord's prayer, the creed, or the ten commandments, in English. On Palm Sunday, the parents were brought back to Coventry, and the six men were condemned by the bishop to be burned alive; but the widow was liberated. This was in the evening, and Simon Morton, the messenger of the bishop's court, offered to accompany her home. As he led her by the arm, he felt a roll of paper within her sleeve, and said, "Holla! what have you got here?" And so saying, he drew it out, and found that it contained the ten commandments, the creed, and the Lord's prayer, in English. "Aha!" said he, "is this what you have got? Then you may as well go back with me now as at another time; it is all one." And with this he conducted her back to the bishop, who immediately condemned her to death. On the

4th of April, they were all burned together in the Little Park. One of their friends, named Robert Selkeb, escaped this time, but was arrested two years afterwards, and brought to Coventry, where he was burned at the stake the next day.

There is a well-known place in London, called Smithfield, where Bartholomew Fair is now held. How little do thoughtless multitudes, who flock to that fair, ever think of the cruel sufferings which have been endured on that spot by so many faithful servants of Christ, in former days! Men, of whom the world was not worthy, have here in the flames of martyrdom prayed for their murderers, and courageously breathed out their souls. We will mention some of them. When king Henry VIII. had fallen out with the pope, and done away all the monasteries and nunneries, and declared himself the lord of the Anglican church, he appeared as desirous as the pope himself of asserting dominion over men's consciences, and persecuted all whose religious tenets differed from his own. John Lambert, a schoolmaster in London, having been brought before the bishop for writing a book against some of the Romish errors, appealed to the king. Henry, who was vain of his powers as a controversial writer, resolved to hold a public disputation with him; he assembled his great men, and poor Lambert being set before them, had to defend the cause of Christ. Lambert was unfairly treated. The bishops were very vehement, but did not reply to his allegations and proofs. The king then asked him whether he preferred to live or die; and Lambert, upon refusing to deny the truths he had learned, confessed, and proved, was condemned to be burned. His execution was a frightful scene; for, the fire burning but slowly, consumed his legs and arms before it affected his life: two of the guards then pierced him with their halberds, and he died, exclaiming aloud, "None but Christ! None but Christ!"

During the next short reign of Edward VI. public

worship was performed in English, and the people were allowed to read the Scriptures in their mother tongue. The young king himself loved the Scriptures. It is related of him that, when engaged with some companions in amusements suitable for his age, he wished to take down from a shelf something above



his reach. One of his playfellows offered him a large Bible, but Edward refused such assistance with much indignation. He sharply reproved the offerer, adding, it was unfit that he should trample under his feet that which he ought to treasure up in his head and heart. When the three swords, the emblems of his three kingdoms, were presented him at his coronation, the pious Edward remarked that one more sword was wanting. The nobles about him asked him what sword he meant, and he said, "The Bible! That book is the sword of the Spirit, and is of more worth than all the others."

But when, after his short reign, his sister, queen Mary, succeeded to the throne in the year 1553, this liberty of reading the Scriptures was withdrawn, popery was restored, public worship was again performed in Latin, preaching and public Scripture reading were also forbidden, and whoever was found with a copy of the Bible or Testament, in English, was denounced, and dealt with as an heretic. There were many, however, in different parts of the country, who took every opportunity of privately meeting for the worship of God in uprightness and truth. These were often detected, many of them condemned to death, and their assemblies suppressed and dispersed.

The numbers that privately assembled were from forty to two hundred at each place, but seldom more. Five of their ministers were apprehended; one of whom, named Rough, was burned in Smithfield. Their last minister, Bentham, afterward bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, had several narrow escapes. Rough was arrested and imprisoned on Sunday, December 12, 1557. On this day there was a grand public entertainment at Islington; and, as multitudes flocked to it, the pious believers took advantage of this to meet and celebrate the Lord's supper. But the queen's vice-chancellor having received information about it, ordered the persons assembled to be arrested. Rough, and Simpson, a deacon, being among them, the former was brought before the bishop of London, and accused of maintaining that the bread and wine in the sacrament of the altar were not transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ. He was also charged with objecting to the sacrifice of the mass, and to Latin worship; with administering the Lord's supper in both kinds to the laity; with having spoken against the pope and his supremacy; with having written letters to those who had fled the kingdom on religious accounts, and having received books from them; with asserting that, when he was

at Rome, he saw very little good there, and much evil, etc.

Ten days afterwards, on the 22nd of December, he was burned at Smithfield, as guilty of these charges and with him Margaret Mearing, a member of his congregation. His deacon, Simpson, was also severely tortured, to compel him to give up the names of other members of these assemblies; but, being strengthened from above, he endured all with firmness, and on the 28th of March was burned at Smithfield.

Simpson had kept, as deacon, a register of the members of his little church, and of other matters of business connected with it. This he commonly carried about his person; but it is remarkable, that on the Friday previous to his apprehension he was persuaded by Rough not to take it with him. He consented, though rather reluctantly, to leave it behind, in the care of Rough's wife, and thus it was preserved from the hands of the papists.

These private assemblies of pious Christians experienced many pleasing proofs of God's special care over them. When they had met in the garret of a house in the suburbs of the metropolis, they were discovered, and an officer had been sent for to apprehend them; but they received timely notice of their danger, and dispersed immediately. As some of them were passing a narrow street, they saw a bitter persecutor, named John Aveles, waiting for them, but they escaped him. They often met in some vessel on the Thames, and twice or thrice they had prayer, preaching, and the Lord's supper, on board of one that lay between Ratcliffe and Rotham, and providentially escaped after they were betrayed. Once, when they had assembled at a room in Pudding Lane, John Aveles came to the house, and tried to elicit from the person living there some information about them; but God graciously prevented it, and Aveles left the house without knowing that they were there. Another time

they were in imminent danger of detection when assembled in Thames Street. The house was beset by their enemies, and there appeared no hope of escape; one of them, who was a sailor, got out behind towards the river, swam to a wherry which lay a little way out, beckoned his companions to the boat, and paddled it safely, without oars, by using his shoes, across to Southwark. Another similar providential instance, was that of a man who had got admitted to their society, with a view to obtain all their names, and expose their proceedings. But when he was in their company, he became converted, and cried to God for mercy.

On the 17th of September, one of them, named Austin, was burned at Smithfield, with his wife and two others. Rough, their minister, was present at the scene; and as he was returning home, he met a gentleman named Farrar, who knew him, and asked where he had been. Rough answered, he had been to a sight which he would not have missed for the world. "Where?" said Farrar. "I have been," he replied, "where one learns the way." He then told him he had seen Austin burned alive at the stake. His anticipation of his own martyrdom was but too well founded; for, in less than three months, he resigned his life upon the same spot. One of the earliest martyrs in queen Mary's reign was Thomas Tomkins, a weaver in Shoreditch, a man of exemplary piety, who, in the simple manner of former times, prayed with the industrious housewives when they came to his house to bring him yarn to weave. And this was no mere form with him; for his whole conduct every way accorded with it. He was brought before bishop Bonner, as an enemy to the popish church, and being kept in prison for six months, he was again brought up for examination. The bishop was in a violent passion with him, plucked off a part of the good man's beard, and when he found his steadfastness not to be shaken, he thought fit to try how he would bear a foretaste of

death. Several of his clergy were assembled around him, and he sent Tomkins. A large wax candle stood lighted on the table. The bishop took hold of the poor weaver's fingers, and held his hand some time over the flame. Tomkins perceiving Bonner's rage, regarded his own death as very near, and committed himself to God, saying, "Lord, into thine hands I commend my spirit!" He afterwards told a friend that, while his hand was burning, his spirit was so strengthened, that he felt no pain at all, but was enabled to stand without shrinking, till the sinews and veins were shrivelled together, and the blood spurted out into the face of one of the clergy, who then persuaded the bishop to desist. On the 16th of March, 1555, at eight o'clock in the morning, Tomkins was burned in Smithfield, and suffered with admirable patience and fortitude.

In the evening before bishop Hooper was burned, at Gloucester, a blind boy, named Thomas Drowry, asked permission to visit him, and it was granted. The bishop conversed with him, and when he found him well-grounded in the faith of Christ, he said to him, "My poor lad, God has deprived you of bodily sight, for what reason is best known to himself; but he has given you another and much more valuable sight, for he has furnished your soul with the eyes of knowledge and faith. May he give you grace to pray continually to himself, that you may never lose such sight as this; for then you would be not only bodily but spiritually blind." The next year, Thomas Drowry was called to follow bishop Hooper to death. The bishop's secretary was present at the final examination of the poor blind boy, and relates that the chancellor of the diocese, Dr. Williams, finding that the boy did not believe in the transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ, said, "You are a heretic, and shall be burned: pray who taught you this heresy?" The boy replied, "You, Mr. Chancellor." "Where did I teach it you?" said the chancellor,

alarmed. The boy replied, "You taught it ~~there~~ yonder, in that place," pointing to the altar; for he re-



collected whereabouts it stood. "And pray, when did I teach you so?" "Once," he said, "when you preached a sermon upon the sacrament, which many others heard besides me. You said that the sacrament was to be taken spiritually, and with faith; not carnally, and after the mere outward form, which the papists teach." Williams had actually preached this in the reign of king Edward. The shameless renegade replied, "Well, do now as I do, and then you will save your life: you will escape burning at the stake." The boy answered, "However you may trifle with God, and with his word, and with your own conscience, I will not do so." "Then the Lord have

mercy upon your soul!" said the chancellor; "for I shall pass sentence of death upon you." The boy replied, "God's will be done!" The bishop's secretary, deeply affected at what he thus witnessed, interposed, and said, "For shame! you surely will not pass sentence against yourself! At least let it be the business of another to do that!" "No," said the hardened man; "I choose to obey the laws; and shall pass sentence as my office requires." The poor blind boy was then condemned, and he suffered at the stake.

When John Lawrence, the martyr, was burned at Colchester, his legs had become so weak and full of wounds, through hard treatment and long confinement, that his persecutors had to convey him to the place of execution in a chair. While he was sitting in the chair, a number of young children gathered round the pile, and repeatedly cried out, "Lord, remember thy promise, and give strength unto thy servant!" Thus out of the mouth of children did God perfect his praise.

When Laurence Sanders was brought to the stake, in the year 1555, he kissed it, saying, "Welcome, Christ's cross! welcome, everlasting life!"

During the short reign of queen Mary, many of the clergy, besides the bishops already noticed, and even some ladies, endured a similar death, for their rejection of popery.

Elizabeth, in the year 1558, granted her subjects what they had so long desired, the liberty of professing pure Christian doctrine. The Anglican church retained episcopal government. Thirty years after this, the puritans began to separate from it, who accorded rather with the reformed church in discipline.

The foundation of reform in the church of Scotland was laid by Patrick Hamilton, who had been in Germany, where he became acquainted with the doctrines of Luther. He died a martyr at the stake, and his last words were, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" After his death, the reformation in Scotland was carried on by the vigorous John Knox, who maintained

intimate correspondence with Calvin at Geneva, and who, after encountering very fierce opposition, in which he displayed the greatest courage and firmness, was enabled to effect the national establishment of the reformed religion in Scotland, while the reigning family persisted in its adherence to the Romish communion.

III.—ATTEMPTS AT REFORMATION IN ITALY AND SPAIN.

WHEN men undertake to build a tower of Babel of their own, and God is pleased to hinder their building from reaching to heaven, he has only to confound their language. Thus he caused a confusion of language to prevail in the Romish church about the time of the Reformation, to prevent the further rise of the towering Babylonian fabric of popery. Even in the vicinity of Rome itself, many had listened with eagerness to the doctrines of the reformers, especially as the corruptions of the church were more glaring there than elsewhere; and the honest and seriously minded could not avoid imagining that things ought not so to be. And it is remarkable, that at the time when Luther stood up in Germany, four cardinals and four bishops presented a memorial to the pope, upon the positive necessity of some reformation in the church. The memorial, after exhibiting a variety of ecclesiastical abuses to be removed, concluded in the following words:—"The city of Rome is the mother of the church, and the mistress of all other churches: therefore the worship of God and the purity of morals ought to flourish here more than any where. But, alas! holy father, all strangers are offended when they enter St. Peter's church, and witness what ignorant and negligent priests are set up to instruct the people in the mass. Yea, in this city, lewd women are suffered to go about as if they were ladies of reputation, and are seen walking of an evening in company with young

gentlemen of the families of cardinals and of the clergy. We trust that your holiness is chosen to restore the honour of the name of Christ, which is forgotten among the people, and even among the clergy; and that, through your means, it will begin to live again in our hearts, be manifest in our lives, and heal our diseases; that it will bring the flock of Christ into one fold; that it will avert from us the displeasure and judgments of God which we deserve, which are suspended over us, and are likely soon to break upon us." This remarkable epistle was addressed to Pius III., but produced no effect; and cardinal Caraffa, when he was afterwards pope, by the name of Paul IV., though he had been one of those who drew it up, ordered the very advice he had thus tendered to his predecessor to be registered on the list of prohibited books. •

The evangelical doctrines, however, soon found their way into Italy. Luther's writings were introduced there very plentifully, and were read with such avidity, that the booksellers made exorbitant profits by them. Melancthon, writing to the prince of Anhalt, says, "Supplies of books, sufficient to stock many a bookseller, have been conveyed to Italy from the last book-fair, notwithstanding the pope has issued fresh injunctions against us: but the word of the Lord is not bound, and the truth can never be suppressed." An Italian version of the New Testament, by Bruccioli, was published in the year 1530, and was very much sought after, together with other writings agreeing with the reformers, which were very widely circulated. Mollio of Montaltino, a monk, who was afterwards burned at Rome, said to Zanchius, "Purchase Bullinger's work, *De Originibus Erroris*; and if you have no money to buy it, pluck out your right eye to pay for it, and read the purchased book with your left." In several cities, and even at Faenza, in the papal territory, preaching directly opposed to Romish errors was conducted in private houses; and the numbers of the evangelical, as they were called, increased daily. Indeed, the doctrines of the reformers were preached

even in public, before the year 1530. Pope Clement VII. writes, "It is with sincere regret we hear, from good authority, that many of our clergy, both secular and regular, in several provinces of Italy, have become so infected with the Lutheran heresy, that they corrupt the minds of the people, even by public preaching, to the no small scandal of all faithful Christians." It was at that time the general remark of the Romanists, that as the plague was more infectious in Italy, because of the climate being warmer than in Germany, so Lutheranism, when it had once infected the warmer passions and livelier imaginations of the Italians, would spread there with the greater vehemence and malignity. Facts showed this remark to be substantially correct; and, had not very violent measures been adopted for the suppression of all evangelical belief, Italy, as well as Germany, would in all probability have shaken off her ancient yoke of superstition. Preparations were certainly not wanting for it. In Bologna, for example, the number of Protestants was very considerable. Bucer, a German reformer, congratulates them, in a letter of the year 1541, upon their increase in knowledge and in numbers; and Alfieri, in a letter of 1545, to an acquaintance in Germany, says, that a nobleman in Bologna was ready to raise six thousand men for the evangelical party, should it be considered necessary to take the field against the pope.

At Imola, in Romagna, an Observantine monk was preaching that heaven is to be purchased by the merit of our good works; when a youth, one of the audience, called out, "That is blasphemy; for the Bible tells us, that Christ purchased heaven for us by his sufferings and death, and bestowed it freely by his grace." This raised a disputation between the youth and the preacher. The monk, incensed at being contradicted by so young a person, and at the favourable countenance shown him by the audience, exclaimed, "Get you gone, you young clown: you are hardly out of your leading strings, and do you presume to give your opinion upon matters which have puzzled the

most learned divines?" The youth replied, "Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength?'" The preacher, enraged and confounded, instantly left the pulpit, uttering threats against the youth, who was immediately apprehended and committed to prison, where he remained a long time, but what finally became of him is not known.

One principal means of spreading the gospel in Italy, at this period, was the war by which that country was desolated in the former part of the sixteenth century. There were many Protestants among the troops, which the emperor, Charles v., marched thither from Germany; as likewise among the Swiss auxiliaries, who followed the banner of Francis I. of France. These foreigners, with all the boldness of men who have the sword in hand, conversed freely upon religious subjects with the natives in whose houses they were quartered. Boasting of the religious liberty of their own country, they laughed at the terrific accounts which the monks had spread respecting the reformers, spoke of Luther and his coadjutors with the warmest encomiums, and expressed their astonishment that so intelligent a people as the Italians should continue to submit, with such dastardly and blind subjection, to a lazy and immoral set of clergy. The angry manifestos, which the pope and the emperor published against each other, served to strengthen the impressions which such representations would naturally produce. At length, Rome itself was taken and pillaged by the imperial forces, and the pope was made prisoner. While he remained beleaguered in the castle of St. Angelo, a troop of German soldiers one day assembled in the streets of Rome, and their leader, whose name was Grünwald, wearing the papal robes and the triple crown, and mounted on an ass richly caparisoned, paraded the city, accompanied by his fellows, who were also disguised in the dresses of cardinals, and waving his blessing to the multitudes as he rode along, ludicrously aped the pomp and state of the pope. The

procession moved on till they came to the moat of St. Angelo, where the mimic pope had a large goblet of wine put into his hand, with which he pledged the good health and safe imprisonment of pope Clement VII., and handed the goblet to his comrades for the same purpose. He then administered an oath to his mock cardinals, that they should do all loyal and true obedience to their sole and rightful sovereign lord the emperor, and be subject to the temporal powers, as the word of God enjoins. The mock pope then uttered a solemn vow to give and bequeath his power and authority to Martin Luther, that he might put the church into a better condition, and exclaimed aloud, "All who agree with me, and wish to see this brought to pass, hold up their hands!" Then the whole troop held up their hands above their heads, and cried, "Long live pope Luther." This was done within the observation of Clement VII. himself; so low was he then sunk in the eyes of many.

Nevertheless, the pillars of Romanism in Italy had not decayed sufficiently to be broken up; and its abettors had no sooner recruited their strength, than they most vigorously set about the work of eradicating every trace of Lutheran doctrine in that country, especially after it was found that so many individuals had seriously embraced it. All the powers of the Inquisition, with its secret racks and public executions by fire and fagot, were therefore now resorted to. Many Protestants were arrested; some of them were condemned to the galleys, others to perpetual imprisonment, and others, with their wives and children, were banished from the country; while a still greater number fled, for the safety of their lives, to foreign lands, so that refugees, from every town of any consequence in Italy, were to be met with in some part or other of Protestant Europe. At Venice, the persons arrested were secretly removed from their cells in the dead of the night, put into a gondola, accompanied by a single priest, and rowed out to the open sea, where another boat was in waiting. Then a plank was laid

across from one gondola to the other, and each several captive in fetters, with a heavy stone fastened to his feet, was placed upon the plank; and, upon a signal given, the gondolas being pushed apart, the martyr was sunk alive into the deep below.

Pope Julius III. did what he could to oppose the progress of the Reformation. Several persons were burned, hanged, or beheaded at Rome every day; all the dungeons were thronged, and more prisons were erected. Two Roman persons of rank were among the number of the captives. After long holding out, they were induced to renounce their principles by the promise of liberty. But what was the consequence? One of them was sentenced to a fine of eighty thousand crowns, and imprisonment for life; the other to the same imprisonment, and a fine of a thousand crowns. During the whole of this century, the dungeons of the Inquisition throughout Italy were filled with victims, and capital punishments were inflicted from time to time. Still, to the end of the seventeenth century, there were persons in Italy who secretly favoured the doctrines of the Reformation; and several Englishmen, who had gone thither into voluntary exile out of zeal for popery, were converted to the Protestant faith during their abode in that country. We have room only for a few particulars from the Italian annals.

Celio Secundo Curio was born at Turin, in the year 1503; he was the youngest of twenty-three children; of a noble family, and was left an orphan at nine years of age. He had received a beautiful manuscript Bible from his father in his childhood; he applied diligently to the reading of Scripture, and became gradually acquainted with the writings of the reformers. This determined him to visit Germany; but, on his way, he was arrested and imprisoned by a popish prelate; he was liberated by the intercession of his relatives, and sent to a convent where he was very zealous in instructing the monks. In the chapel of this convent a chest stood upon the altar, containing some bones of a pretended saint, which were revered as precious relics.

Curio, grieved at such superstition, went to it one day, and emptied it of the ancient bones, substituting a Bible in their place. This having been soon discovered, suspicion immediately rested upon Curio, who fled the place, and escaped to Milan. From thence he went once more to his native city, to obtain possession of his property, which was in the hands of his sister and her husband: but they, preferring to keep his money, informed against him as a heretic, and thus obliged him to leave Italy. After this he undertook the education of a few young pupils, in a small town of Savoy. He heard one day a friar in the pulpit speaking against the German reformers, and adducing distorted passages from Luther's Commentary on the Galatians to support his assertions. Curio happened to have Luther's Commentary in his pocket, and as soon as the sermon was concluded, he read to the congregation the passages in question, as Luther had really written them. This exasperated the audience so exceedingly against the dishonest friar, that they compelled him to quit the town. When the Inquisition had notice of it, they arrested Curio, and sent him to Turin, where he was closely imprisoned, and his feet made fast in the stocks. Information was in the meantime despatched to Rome, to procure his condemnation. He contrived, however, to escape from his imprisonment, and fled to Pavia, where his learning gained him an appointment in the university. He remained there three years, the students and his friends protecting him from the Inquisition, till, in 1543, the pope himself interposed, and then Curio fled to Switzerland. He returned soon afterwards to Italy, to bring away his wife and children; but the inquisitors, who were on the watch for him, discovered him at Passa, where he had come with his family. Just as he had sat down with them to dinner, a popish captain entered the room, and claimed him as his prisoner in the pope's name. Curio, who saw no way of escape, rose from his seat to surrender himself; but, as he went up to the officer, he had forgotten in the suddenness of the moment to lay

down a large carving knife which he had just been using at table. The captain, seeing such a tall robust man coming up to him with a great knife in his hand, was put off his guard, and started back to a corner of the room. Curio, who had extraordinary presence of mind, took advantage of it, walked directly to the door, dashed through the soldiers, who had not firmness enough to stop him, seized his horse from the stable, and was out of sight from his pursuers before they had recovered from their consternation. He rode back to Switzerland, where he was most kindly welcomed by the Protestants, was appointed to a professorship in the university of Basle, which he held twenty years, and died there, in 1569.

John Craig was born in Scotland, in the year 1512. His father was killed soon after in the battle of Flodden Field; and Craig, in the year 1537, left his native country, went to France, and thence to Italy. He entered a convent at Bologna, and had great reputation there. In the library of this convent he found a work by Calvin, which he read with attention, and thus became convinced that the Romish church was not the true one. But, forgetting the danger of talking freely on that subject in Italy, he unguardedly communicated his discovery to his brother monks. This would have cost him much, had not an aged father in the convent, who was his countryman, assisted him in escaping from the place. He then became tutor in the family of a neighbouring nobleman, who favoured the Protestant sentiments. He had not long been there before both himself and the nobleman, being denounced as heretics, were arrested by officers of the Inquisition, and taken to Rome. There he was confined nine months, in a dark and noisome dungeon, and, refusing at his examination to renounce his belief, was condemned, with several others, to be burned alive. His sentence was pronounced on the 20th of August, 1559. Wonderful, however, are the ways of Providence! on the very evening before the day appointed for his execution, pope Paul IV. died; in consequence of

which, according to an old custom, all the prisons in Rome were thrown open. But, while the prisoners for debt, and for civil offences were allowed to depart, the heretics, after they had been permitted to go outside their prison walls, were brought back to their dungeons. Nevertheless, an insurrection, which happened that same night, afforded Craig and his fellow-prisoners an opportunity of escaping, and they fled to a house a little way out of the city. They had not long been there before they were overtaken by soldiers, who had been sent after them. Their captain, upon entering the house, looked Craig wistfully in the face, took him aside, and asked if he remembered once relieving a poor wounded soldier near Bologna. Craig was too confused at the moment to recollect the circumstance. "But I remember it," said the officer, "and am the person whom you relieved. God now empowers me to return a kindness shown to an unfortunate stranger; you have your liberty: your companions I dare not allow to escape; but for your sake I will do everything for them that shall be in my



power." He then gave him all the money he had in his purse, and advised him how to get away in

safety. Craig took leave of him with grateful acknowledgments. In his way through Italy, he avoided the high roads to escape detection, and the money he had received from the grateful soldier was by degrees all spent. He sat down to rest by the side of a wood, to consider what to do, when a dog came running up to him with a purse in his mouth. Craig, thinking the dog might have been sent by some one concealed in the wood, with an evil design upon him, attempted to drive the animal away. But the dog would not go till Craig had taken the purse, in which he found money enough to help him on his journey. Craig went to Vienna, where he was required to preach before Maximilian, then archduke of Austria, and afterwards the second emperor of that name. This prince would have retained him under his patronage; but, as the pope still denounced Craig, and employed spies in search of him, he was dismissed with a safe conduct, and arrived in Scotland in the year 1560, where he was immediately admitted a minister of the reformed church. But his expatriation of four-and-twenty years had made him almost forget his mother tongue, and he preached at first in Latin, before such as could understand him. He afterwards became the coadjutor of the celebrated John Knox, and mainly assisted in completing the Reformation in his native country.

A similar deliverance was experienced by Barbara di Montalto, the wife of an Italian physician, whose house stood upon a lake, and had been used in former times as a place of defence. It had a secret door, which required six men to open it. This door was immediately at the edge of the water, where a boat lay always ready for the reception of the family, in case of any sudden danger. The physician one night had a troublesome dream, which directed him to get up and order his servants to open this door. They did so; and early the next morning some officers of the Inquisition came to the house, entered the chamber where his wife was dressing, and showed her their commission of arrest. With great presence of mind,

she asked permission to get her out-of-door dress in the adjoining room. She instantly descended the stairs, sprang into the boat, and was rowed away from her enemies. She had been accused of speaking against the mass, and would probably have been burned at the stake.

Not so successful were the Waldenses of Calabria, who had increased there to the number of four thousand. With wives and children, they were compelled to desert the towns of Santo Risto and La Guardia, and to retire into forests and other hiding-places, where many of them perished by the sword of the military, and many more died of hunger and hardship. The rest were taken and tortured, to induce them to confess crimes they had never committed. One Stephano Carlino was stretched on the rack till his body was rent open. Another, named Verminelli, was made to lie eight hours on a torturing machine, called "the infernal," but without confessing anything that his tormentors wished to extract from him. One Marzone was scourged naked with iron rods, dragged through the streets, and then despatched with burning flambeaux. Bernardino Conte was besmeared with pitch, and then publicly burned. Sixty married women were laid on the rack in prison, most of whom died of their tortures.

The horrible treatment of the Waldenses of Montalto, in the year 1560, is described by an eye-witness, who was himself a Roman Catholic, as follows: * "The dreadful execution which the Lutherans have undergone this morning, June 11, I can, to say the truth, compare only to the slaughter of a flock of sheep. They had been all crammed into a single house as into a sheepfold. The executioner brought them out one by one, and cut their throats. They were eighty-eight in number: no one who had witnessed the death of one could stay to behold that of another; and I can

* Some of the more horrible parts of the recital are here omitted.

hardly refrain from tears while I write of it. The resignation and patience with which they went to martyrdom and death were truly astonishing. I shudder when I think how I beheld them thus treated as sheep for the slaughter. Carts were, by order, provided to take away the bodies, which are to be quartered, and hung up on all the high roads of Calabria." A youth, named Samson, was thrown down from the top of a tower; the viceroy passing by the tower the next day, and seeing the poor fellow still alive, with his limbs shattered, stamped upon his head, and exclaimed, "What! is not the cur dead? Throw him to the hogs." A Neapolitan historian of that period, speaking of these butcheries, has the following passage:—"Some were slaughtered with the knife, others were sawn asunder, and others were precipitated from high rocks. All of them, in one way or another, underwent a horrible execution; but they deserved it. It is strange what is reported of their obstinacy; for, while fathers saw their sons, and sons their fathers executed, they not only showed no uneasiness, but said cheerfully that they were going to be angels of God. So much were they deluded by the devil, to whom they had already given themselves." But how much were they deluded, who attributed the courage of those martyrs of Christ to Satan! were not they like the Jews of old, who ascribed the miracles of our Lord to Beelzebub?

Palcario, an Italian Protestant, having been questioned as to the first foundation on which men may safely build all their hopes of salvation, answered, "Christ!" Being asked what was the second ground to build upon, he said, "Christ!" And then what was the third; he still answered, "Christ!" In a memorial, written by him to his judges, he says, "In my opinion, no Christian ought to think of dying on his bed in these times. To be accused, imprisoned, scourged, hung up, sewed in a sack, and thrown to wild beasts, is not enough. Let them roast me at the fire, if only the truth can be better brought to light by

such a death." He was brought to the fiery trial, and he endured it with steadfastness.

Bartoccio was burned alive at Genoa, in the year 1567. He walked to execution with a firm step and an unchanged countenance; and, when enveloped by the flames, he was heard to exclaim, "Victory! victory!"

In Spain, a considerable time before the invention of printing, the authorities had commenced to destroy by fire all the books of science they could get into their hands. In the year 1434, the library of Henry of Arragon was set on fire, and consumed, under the pretext that it contained books upon the black art. Valuable Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts, with works in the Greek, Latin, and Castilian languages, were heaped upon the burning fagots, and consumed. The ignorant clergy could not endure to be told of any other branches of knowledge beside the little they knew; and the more they kept the people in ignorance, the more easy they found it to keep the key of other men's consciences, and to turn it to their own advantage. Nevertheless, the doctrines of truth from Germany passed over the high ridges of the Pyrenees. During the presidency of the fifth general inquisitor, the sentiments of the reformers began to spread in Spain. A bookseller of Basle purchased, at the Frankfort fair, many hundred copies of the works of Luther and other reformers, and sent them to Spain by the way of Paris. Julian of Hernandez also introduced many writings of the reformers into that country. He was arrested at his return, was tortured several times, and convicted of having conveyed into the realm a great number of books in casks with double bottoms, between which was a small quantity of French wine. After undergoing inexpressible torments, he was burned alive. In this way the doctrine of the reformers spread in a short time over the whole surface of Spain, from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, and from the Pyrenees to Portugal; and probably would soon have

taken root, had not the Inquisition been so diligent with fire and sword to suppress it. One of the Inquisitors remarks upon it, that "it was high time, and that two months later would have been too late." Persons of both sexes, and of all conditions, showed everywhere astonishing eagerness to learn the new doctrine, and nothing but the great vigilance of the Inquisition could have hindered its further spread. An unhappy woman, named Maria Gomez, was the first occasion of the persecution. She was housekeeper to a clergyman of Seville, named Zafra, and had attended private meetings of Protestants, which had been held by this clergyman. The woman suddenly became deranged, and was put into confinement, but effected her escape, and hastened to the Inquisition, where she disclosed all respecting the private meetings she had attended. Upon recovering her intellect, she adhered to her profession of evangelical doctrine, and was burned, together with her sister and the sister's three daughters. •

On the 21st of May, 1559, the first public burning of Protestant heretics, called an *Auto da Fé*, took place at Valladolid; and, from that time, every Spanish court for judging heretics, appointed at least one such *Auto da Fé* in the larger towns annually; at which there were always a greater or lesser number of Protestants burned alive, in company with Jews, Mohammedans, adulterers, sorcerers, and other culprits. When any one at the stake was prevailed on to recant, the favour of strangling was granted before his body was committed to the flames.

Among others, there was a brother, with his two sisters, condemned to be burned. The three stakes to which they were severally bound stood very near together; and at the moment when the pile was kindled, the sisters were heard repeating the assurances of their steadfastness in the faith. The brother, whose name was Gonzalez, had been gagged till now, and employed the few remaining minutes of his liberty of utterance in encouraging his sisters, and singing with

them the 109th Psalm; neither did they cease to sing till the flames suffocated them.

These cruel and continued persecutions had the effect of removing, in a few years, every trace of Protestants in Spain, and not a relic of them appeared to be left, when the heaps of ashes to which their bodies had been reduced by the fires of the Inquisition had disappeared. But the memory of these noble martyrs is never to be effaced; their names are written in heaven, and their crowns are there!

IV.—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

In France, the reformed confession of faith had great influence, and gained many adherents, who were called Hugonots by their enemies, after the name of a sect in the Netherlands, who termed themselves Huguenooten; that is, partakers of the Spirit. They endured many wars and persecutions; and many thousands of them perished by a massacre on Bartholomew's day, 1572, directed by the king of France, and for which public thanksgivings were offered at Rome, when the intelligence was received by the pope, that so many Protestants had been slaughtered by their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. At length they obtained, in 1598, full liberty of conscience, and permission to follow their own mode of worship.

In the Netherlands, which at that time were under the Spanish government, the Inquisition, fearfully as it raged there, could not effect the suppression of the evangelical faith, which in the Seven United Provinces gained entire ascendancy. Pistorius, and other reformers, had sown the good seed there, which became very fruitful through the blood of martyrs.

In Denmark and Norway, where Taussan and other distinguished men published the pure doctrine, king Frederick I. declared himself for the Reformation; and

the Protestants, in 1527, obtained equal immunities with the Roman Catholics.

In Sweden, king Gustavus Vasa, with the advice of Olaus Petri, and other worthy preachers, introduced the Reformation, and concerned himself at the same time for the Christian instruction of the Laplanders in the north of his dominions, who were still in a state of heathenism.

In Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania, the reformed doctrine found adherents. Livonia, Esthonia, and Courland early declared for the Lutheran doctrine. The bright light of the Reformation penetrated even to remote and dreary Iceland, and dispelled the ancient superstition there.

How great, under the Divine blessing, did that work become, the first beginnings of which were apparently so insignificant! In the middle of the sixth century, two Nestorian monks brought the first silk-worms from China, concealed in a bamboo cane; and now there is scarcely a husbandman's daughter in many countries of Europe that does not wear some article of silk. What does it signify how small anything is, provided there is life in it! A single spark of fire may cause the conflagration of a forest; a single apple-kernel can in time stock a hundred thousand orchards. In the ninety-five theses of Luther there was life, there were seeds, there were sparks; they kindled, they became productive: the fire spread far and wide, for the Spirit of the Lord did blow upon it: the seed-corn propagated itself, for the breath of the Almighty filled it with life.

V.—CONTINUED OPPOSITION OF POPERY TO THE PROTESTANT CHURCH.

CONSIDERING the mighty disruption which Romanism suffered by the Reformation, nothing could be more welcome to it than the creation within its own pale of

that spiritual power, which soon became one of the chief supports of papal domination. That power was the Jesuitical order, founded by Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish nobleman, and ratified by the pope in the year 1540. Long before this a number of similar orders had arisen, which were distinguished by a peculiar mode of dress, rules, and vows; and those fraternities of monks were called Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, Paulines, Bernardines, after the names of their founders; others were called Carmelites, Trappists, Carthusians, from their first places of abode; and others had the name of Augustinians, Capuchins, etc., from other circumstances. To the three customary vows among these orders, namely, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, Loyola added a fourth, that of implicit obedience to the papacy. The order had a thousand members at its founder's death, and the number increased every year. Several zealous men went from it to distant countries, as India, China, and Japan, to replace the losses from the Roman Catholic communion in Europe by conversion of the heathen; and persons of sincere piety, great devotedness, and unusual steadfastness were found among them, of whose labours and sufferings one cannot hear without emotion. But soon was it found that their success was only in outward appearance; every sort of evil was mixed in with the work they commenced; and the society in Europe had taken so questionable a turn, as threatened only corruption and ruin. Every important public undertaking was sure to be influenced more or less by its secret interference; its members sought to raise their credit by a great display of learning; and, above all, to get the education, private confidence, and secrets of princes under their control. Their avowed and concealed principles and doctrines were many of them deeply to be abhorred, and made them familiar with, and parties to every crime. Among such principles they held that God can dispense with our worshipping himself and loving our neighbour; that he allows men to speak untruths

to serve his cause, that it is enough if we love God at the moment of death, etc. As they actually practised principles of this sort, we may easily imagine how it was that they were sworn enemies to Protestants, and laboured covertly and openly for the annihilation of the evangelical church.

In aid of this society, another was established at Rome, in 1622, known by the name of the Propaganda; *Congregatio de propaganda fide*. The object of this society was to gain adherents to the church of Rome, from among Christians who did not belong to it, as well as from among Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans; and all possible influence and arts have been used by it for this purpose. An institution was opened by it at Rome, which continues to this day, for the education of missionaries; and many young men are still trained there as such, and instructed in the languages of various and distant countries. Its missionaries have sought their fields of labour in Abyssinia and Japan, in China and India, in Paraguay and Canada; and, in many places, have brought over large bodies of pagans to the Romish communion. The great day of Christ alone will show whether, amongst the much wood, hay, and stubble of these builders, any gold or silver are to be found.

At the noted council of Trent, whose sittings continued from A.D. 1545 to 1563, the avowed object was that reform of the Romish church, in its head and members, which had so long been promised by successive popes; but they were never sincere in holding out expectations of the kind, and the council of Trent really aimed to strengthen only the Romish hierarchy, and to secure it against future aggressions. Hence the council closed its sittings with the resolution of destroying and eradicating, if possible, all Protestant doctrines. When this could be effected in no other way, military expedients were adopted; and the relentless duke Alba boasted that he had massacred the Protestants of the Netherlands by thousands.

Soon after this, it was the turn of Germany to suffer;

and a thirty years' war, from 1618 to 1648, which commenced in Bohemia, would most probably have deprived the German Protestants of their independence, had not Divine Providence sent them a deliverer, commissioned to humble the haughty foe, and to sacrifice his own life in the cause of evangelical liberty. That deliverer was Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden. The Romish party had, in the year 1629, so acquired the ascendancy, that an imperial decree ordered the Protestants to restore to it all church property. Then it was that the pious king of Sweden came forward, and on the 4th of June, 1630, entered the field with his few but brave troops; and as he had begun his work with God, so God was with him. Like a true champion of the gospel, he inspired his soldiers not with curses and promises, but with singing and prayer, and he himself showed as much humility as courage. After entering the city of Kemberg, in the year 1631, a multitude of young persons assembled in front of his residence. He asked what it meant; and a clergy-



man of the place said to him, "They are desirous to see the great king from Sweden." The king went

immediately into the street, and said aloud to the assembly, "My young friends, you here see a great sinner from Sweden; and it is only simple persons who call him the great king of that country."

On the 17th of September, 1631, Gustavus Adolphus, in a battle near Leipsic, totally defeated the enemies' forces, commanded by general Tilly; and marching through Germany in triumph, he was everywhere affectionately greeted by the Protestants as their deliverer. The emperor then sent against him the great commander Wallenstein, and, after long delays, a general engagement ensued, on the 16th of November, 1632, on the plains of Lutzen. A thick fog, at the dawn of day, intercepted the sight of the enemy. Gustavus availed himself of the interval to hold solemn worship in the open field with all his forces. Luther's hymn,

A rock and fortress is our God,
A good defence and armour," etc.

was sung by his whole army; and then the hymn,

"May God be merciful to us,
And grant to us his blessing."

Just before the attack, the king dictated to his chaplain, who wrote it down, a hymn, which begins,

"Fear not, thou little band of friends,
How much soe'er the foe intends
Thee wholly to destroy," etc.

The tune to this hymn was then played by the military band, in front of the line; and when the king had thus encouraged the hearts of his soldiers with confidence in God, he mounted his horse, and exclaimed, "Now to the charge; and may God direct and help us to fight this day for the honour of his name!" It was then nine o'clock in the morning. Two hours after this he was mortally wounded by a ball, and instantly fell. But his death only served to animate his

army to victory, and the enemy was driven from the field.

The Swedes continued to protect the German Protestants after the death of Gustavus Adolphus; and, on the 24th of October, 1648, the peace of Westphalia was concluded, at Munster, whereby full religious liberty was guaranteed to the Protestants. But how lamentably was Germany desolated at the end of this thirty years' war! Two-thirds of the whole population were lost by it; and in many provinces considerably more. Entire villages were deserted, plundered, and burned; in others, the churches and seminaries were deprived of their respective teachers, and young men who had but newly left school, and had spent only a year at the university, were constrained to accept ordination as parochial clergymen. Many a town has not to this day recovered its former prosperity and number of inhabitants. The fields, heretofore under perpetual culture, had now a wild appearance, as had also the face of society itself; millions of money had been expended, and every thing looked as if God had given up the highly-favoured Germany to interminable sorrow. Nevertheless, even in such distressing times, he displayed his providential care over the nation in general, and over individuals in particular.

Peace was now established; but older and more sure than the record of the peace of Westphalia is that word of Jesus to his followers, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Accordingly, persecution still continued. In Ireland, on the 25th of May, 1641, more than forty thousand Protestants were horribly massacred; and pope Urban VIII. absolved all the murderers. In France, in the year 1685, the edict of Nantes, which had secured to the Protestants the free exercise of their religion, was solemnly revoked, and the reformed were treated with the most wanton barbarity by troops of the king's dragoons. Men and women were hung up alive on hooks in smoking chimneys; others had all their hair torn off; others were led about with hot tongs by the nose, compelled to

walk barefoot on burning coals, or rent alive by their extremities. Many of the atrocities of the Waldensian persecutions were repeated; and hundreds of thousands were glad to escape from France at the peril of their lives. They found hospitable refuge in England, Holland, Prussia, and other countries. While this horrible persecution was going on, there had arisen in that very country, and in the bosom of the Romish church itself, a party, by whose means some spiritual life and savour was conveyed to individual members of the corrupt ecclesiastical body. This was the society of the Jansenists, who, in opposition to the Jesuits, maintained and spread abroad the views of Augustine respecting the free grace of God in Christ, and were hereby brought into long controversy with their opponents. One of that society, Father Quesnel, was made very useful by his celebrated work, entitled, "Reflections on the New Testament;" and the labours of those pious and distinguished men, Pascal and Fenelon, in their intercourse and writings, were of no small service to the Protestant as well as to the Roman Catholic Christians of France. They insisted on practical Christianity, love to God, and self-denial; while infidelity and superstition were alike in arms against them. At the same period, the reformed in the Palatinate, who were become subject to Roman Catholic princes, suffered severe oppressions. In the year 1732, great tribulation came upon those of evangelical sentiments in Salzburg, who were descendants of the Hussites. They were put in chains for the most trivial error, real or supposed, and haled away to the prisons. There the bells were tolled as soon as these poor rebels in fetters approached the suburbs. This was to certify the populace of the arrival of a fresh gang of these offenders. They were driven in open carts into the town, blindfolded like culprits going to execution, and muffled in cloaks. They were then crammed into the vaults of the citadel; the fortress was quite filled with them; and, though the prince-archbishop did not absolutely order them to be imme-

diately put to death, many of them perished of hunger, cold, and hard usage. Those who came off with the mildest punishment were whipped and banished. At length, through the urgent intercession of the Protestant states of the empire, above thirty thousand persons received permission to quit their native soil, leaving all their property behind, to seek another home in Prussia, North America, or elsewhere

VI.—INTERNAL CONDITION OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH.

It is a known perversity of the human heart, that it becomes self-confident in prosperity, as soon as ever the severity of trouble has abated. And, when this self-confidence prevails, contention on points of doctrine easily follows in its train; and minds, which in adversity were mutually united, now part off, each according to its own self-will. But the more intimate our communion is with Christ as our common Head, the more united also are we with one another; and the less we are united in spirit with one another, the less, it is evident, we are enjoying union with Christ.

We have already alluded to the controversies between the Lutherans and the Reformed, respecting the Lord's supper and the ubiquity of Christ's glorified humanity; but among the Lutheran clergy themselves, even while Melancthon was living, there arose various dissensions about the doctrines of free-will, original sin, good works, and the like; and, after his death, these disputes so increased, that it was deemed necessary to set forth the *Formula Concordiæ*, or Prescript of Agreement, in which the doctrines of faith professed by the Lutheran church was more exactly defined, and which this church still regards as one of those records of confession which go by the name of "The Symbolical Books." But every controversial matter could not, of course, be thus put an end to; for as different opinions will arise about the meaning of the

perfect word of God, so will they also arise about the meaning of the imperfect language of men, however carefully it may be expressed. Had all the teachers of the church been persons of true piety, no doubt things would have proceeded more smoothly; but as long as men can have correct views of the truth, without being partakers of the Divine life within, so long will they endeavour to make up with words what they really want in spiritual power and life. It was just so in the case before us; and it served to demonstrate over again, before the eyes of the world, that new doctrines do not necessarily infer new hearts; and even the reformers had often to complain, that those who profess the pure truth conformed their lives but little to that profession.

Luther said that a real Christian was a rare sight; and that it would be well if most were as honest and devout as many a heathen who had only the law of nature to guide him! Speaking of the defective education of children, he observed, "This is the reason why we have such an ill-bred, unruly community in German Christendom as is hardly to be met with elsewhere; yes, this is the reason why corruption so universally prevails amongst us: we must begin with the children, if we are to hope for any improvement." Another writer concludes his account of the sixteenth century, by observing that "every part of Christendom is marked by a want of unity and mutual confidence: sin has risen to its height, and repentance and regret for the want of Christian love is not to be heard of." In the seventeenth century, similar complaints were made by pious men. The excellent John Valentine Andreæ says, "We need only look into our churches, our courts, or our universities, and we shall find there no lack of ambition, envy, idleness, luxury, debauchery, covetousness, and such like ruling sins." Again—"From all ranks and conditions, I should be glad to subtract something, and to add something. To the princes, I would give more religion, and less extravagance. To the state counsellors, more independence,

and less self-interest. To the consistories, more real Christian compassion for souls, and less men-pleasing. To the nobles, more true nobleness of spirit, and less impiety. To the divines, a more exemplary life, and less love of fame and distinction. To the lawyers, more conscientiousness, and less love of gain. To the physicians, more real experience, and less mutual jealousy. To the university professors, more learning, and less self-conceit. To schoolmasters, more real information, and less pedantry. To statesmen, more honesty, and less practical denial of the government of God. To students, more diligence, and less love of expense. To soldiers, more of God's word, and less indifference about the lives of their fellow-men. To the parochial clergy, more watchfulness over themselves and their flocks, and less concern about their stipends." The pious Scriver also tells us, that the church, in his days, was almost everywhere like a field overrun with thorns and thistles, so that a sweet flower or wholesome plant was rarely to be found.

In such a state of things, when most of the teachers of the church were far more concerned about maintaining correct doctrinal notions and systems, than about seeing their fellow-men truly converted to God, and lost themselves in useless controversial subtleties, God raised up some pious and gifted men, who felt deeply what was wanting for the real welfare of the church, and diligently applied themselves to the work of healing her diseases. The first of such here to be noticed, was John Arndt, superintendent-general of the Lutheran church in the district of Celle, who was born in 1555, and died in 1621. He was a very pious and able man, and in his work on "True Christianity," he showed the simple way of attaining the knowledge of God by his works and word, and became serviceable in conducting many thousands of souls to the light of salvation. His treatise has been translated into nearly every language of Europe, and into several languages of Asia; and is to this day regarded, by Christians in Germany, as one of the most valuable works upon

practical piety. But he was decried by many of his contemporaries as a teacher of error, and endured much rancorous opposition, and many a false charge of heresy. Among his contemporaries, who were like-minded with him, John Gerard and the above-mentioned John Andreae and Christian Scriver were the most conspicuous. They likewise were eminently useful men. The highly instructive and spiritual writings of Scriver, which have now begun to be much sought for, have proved a blessing to many.

Philip James Spencer, who lived between the years 1635 and 1705, was added to the number of these excellent labourers. He was an eminently learned, prudent, experienced man, and of unfeigned humility. He was born in Alsace, and enjoyed a pious education. After he had entered on his ministry, he discovered that Protestant Christendom had very much fallen away from the truth, both in doctrine and practice; and his spirit was stirred within him to become an instrument of restoring Christianity. He reflected and inquired seriously after the means of reviving, in the dead mass of the community, the life of true religion; for, with respect to the reputedly orthodox instructors of the church, he saw no hope of its renovation by their means. The best method he could think of was, that the real friends of the gospel should form associations amongst themselves, without separating from the establishment, in order to derive strength by more intimate and edifying communion with one another, and thus gradually to effect a revival in the Christian world. With this view, and during his ministry at Frankfort on the Maine, he commenced, first in his own house, and afterwards in the church, special meetings for edification, which any persons were permitted to attend. He hoped that the unfruitful tree of the Protestant church might again be restored to vigour and fruitfulness by these new grafts; and his hope was not altogether frustrated. His example soon had many imitators; and, before his death, Germany contained a great number of such assemblies for edification. But

forasmuch as Spener taught that a Christian instructor must not only hold pure doctrine, but also himself be born again; as he was very zealous of all unprofitable strife about words, and set a higher value on the Scriptures and a godly life; as he expressed so plainly his hope of a better state of things in the church, and exposed the reigning sins of his own times, he experienced violent opposition from the clergy of his day. His followers at Leipsic and Halle were called Pietists. Various controversies between the orthodox, as they called themselves, and the Pietists, continued for about forty years; and, at the head of the latter, after Spener's death, was Augustus Hermann Francke, a man of Spener's spirit, an Elisha upon whom had descended the mantle of Elijah. How the man of faith effected, from small beginnings, and by means of free contributions which God always sent him at the needful time, the establishment of the great Orphan House at Halle, in which, even within his own lifetime, some thousands of children were educated, and part of them entirely provided for—of this we need not speak, as it is known everywhere. But his care was not confined exclusively to orphan children. Orphan Christendom, also, by the ministry and means of Francke, and of his faithful fellow-labourers, became supplied far and near with excellent pastors and teachers, as also with valuable schoolmasters; all of whom gave testimony, by word and life, to the gospel of Jesus Christ, as the power of God unto salvation. The fruits of their labours remain upon the tree of the Protestant church; many a branch of which owes its present verdure and loveliness to the mercy which God at that period showed unto Zion, and the revival which he then graciously vouchsafed.

VII.—THE ACCOUNT OF THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN
CONTINUED, AND OF THE FORMATION OF THE
PRESENT CHURCH OF THE MORAVIANS.

WE can imagine the feelings of a solitary missionary in a distant land, at seeing a long-expected vessel arrive with a fellow-labourer on board. How joyfully would he welcome and embrace him! Such was the situation of the Bohemian Brethren, when they received the first tidings of Luther, and of his courageous entrance upon the work of Reformation; whereas, forty years before, they had fruitlessly searched the world for Christians like-minded with themselves. As early as the year 1519, some Calixtine priests had written to Luther, exhorting him to steadfastness and endurance, and acknowledging his doctrine to be that of the pure gospel. Luther's reply gave them encouragement to persevere in the truths they were acquainted with, and warned them against being drawn back to the Romish church by any illusory hopes of peace, as they would then have to answer for the blood of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. The Bohemian Brethren desired to form a junction with Luther, but were not inclined to any change in their own church discipline; and as Luther saw no means of introducing that discipline among the German Protestants, it prevented a union from taking place. In the year 1542, the Brethren for the last time sent to Luther, to ascertain whether there was any hope of the admission of their own discipline into the German Protestant churches. The bearers of their message were John Augusta, George Israel, and several others; who, being cordially received, related how the Lutheran doctrine was gaining ground among the Hussites of Bohemia and Moravia: but, they added, that as it furnished no instructions upon church discipline, it tended to produce in their own memories an indifference about that matter, and indeed had already occasioned the separation of many from them who no longer loved to submit

to its wholesome restraint. They therefore asked whether it was right to be unconcerned at such an abuse of evangelical liberty. Luther replied, that popery could only be subverted by thoroughly destroying the foundations whereon it rested, namely, superstition and slavery of conscience; but as it was evident that the world was now inclining to an opposite extreme, (namely, to a licentious abuse of the doctrine of free grace,) he was quite sensible that this evil needed to be opposed with equal zeal, by a restoration of church discipline; and he and his brethren had purposed to give it, at the earliest opportunity, their attentive consideration. Luther dismissed them with the right hand of fellowship, and said, "Be ye apostles to the Bohemians; I and my fellow-labourers desire to be so to our own countrymen! Carry on Christ's work in your native land to the utmost of your power wherever an opening shall be given you; and we will follow it up here, and do our best as God shall enable us."

In the year 1547, a new persecution was stirred up against the Brethren, because they refused to enlist in the forces which the emperor was levying for war with the elector of Saxony. The principal persons among them were imprisoned; some were scourged; others fined, put to the sword, or banished. Their churches and ministers were persecuted with peculiar severity. The latter were obliged to secrete themselves in rocks and caverns, and their enemies endeavoured to circumvent them in every possible manner. Among others, a deacon, named Paul Bosang, was apprehended and haled to prison, where he prayed earnestly for his liberty, and saw in a dream a venerable person directing his attention to an iron spike projecting from the wall of his dungeon. He awoke, found the iron spike where he had seen it in his dream, and with it he made the narrow aperture which had served for his window sufficiently large for his escape. Having, however, fallen asleep from fatigue at his work, he was aroused by a second dream, which admonished him that it was

high time to best himself if he would get away from his tormentors, who were near at hand. He then let himself down through the aperture into the castle moat, found the doors of the garden and the outer castle gates open, as had been announced to him in his dream, and concealed himself in one of the empty shops of the market-place. Here he fell asleep, but seemed again to be awakened by the same voice, saying, "Why tarriest thou here? Knowest thou not that those who escape from prison are pursued?" He left the town immediately, fled into Prussia, and died there, in the year 1551. Thus does God appoint special helps in special emergencies; and, when he sees fit, delivers by extraordinary means those who believe his promise, that as their day so shall their strength be.

One of the above-mentioned ministers, George Israel, was likewise imprisoned, and a thousand florins (nearly ninety-two pounds) were demanded of him for his release. His congregation and other friends offered to advance the money; but he refused it, saying, "It is enough for me that my liberty has been entirely and freely purchased once for all by the blood of Jesus Christ, and I have no need to be redeemed over again with silver and gold. Retain your money, it may be serviceable to you in the exile with which you are threatened." God, however, liberated him by his marvellous providence; for, having disguised himself as a book-keeper, with a pen behind his ear and an inkhorn and paper in his hand, he walked out of prison in broad daylight, through the midst of the guards, and got clear off, and went to Poland. John Augusta, a senior elder, was apprehended and imprisoned with him. His persecutors, by torturing him three times, frequently scourging him, and allowing him only a very small daily ration of bread and water for his sustenance, hoped to bring him to some confession of the crimes with which they falsely charged him; and, though they could not succeed in this, they detained him in prison sixteen years. But his steadfast Christian

conduct, and his effectual service as a prayer, availed at length to the conversion even of his tormentors.

Meanwhile, a church of Bohemian Brethren had been formed at Posen, and George Israel was sent thither as their minister, in 1551. But the rancour of their enemies was such, that he could not venture even in the year 1553 to preach, except at secret meetings of his flock in private houses. The brethren stationed trusty persons at the doors of such houses, with orders not to admit any one of suspicious appearance. And, lest the preacher's voice and the singing of the little company should be overheard in the street, they deadened the sound by placing bolsters and bedding at the windows. But Isbinsky, the bishop of Posen, was informed of these secret meetings, and hired forty men to secure George Israel as his prisoner. The latter neither fled, nor hid himself in the town, but walked about the streets, attending to his business, and committing himself to the Divine protection. He used, however, such means as reason and prudence suggested, as that of frequently changing his dress. Sometimes he went about as a gentleman belonging to the court; sometimes as a waggoner; at other times as a cook or a mechanic: thus, while visiting his believing brethren, he often met the hired assassins in the street; but the eyes of his enemies were so providentially holden that they did not know him. The hatred against the brethren at Posen was so violent, that those who died were refused even common burial; which induced one of them, when dying, to direct that his remains should be sunk in a deep fish-pond.

In the year 1565, Joachim von Neuhaus, chancellor of Bohemia, took a journey with his suite and guards to Vienna, for the purpose of obtaining the emperor Maximilian's signature to a decree for the extirpation of the Brethren from his country. But it is written, Isa. viii. 10, "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us." The chancellor, having obtained the imperial signature, set out on his return to Bohemia;

but as he was passing with his cavalcade over a wooden bridge across the Danube, not far from Vienna, one of the main beams of the bridge gave way, and precipitated the whole company into the river, where most of them, together with the chancellor, were drowned. Six horsemen escaped by swimming, and one young nobleman, who lived to an advanced age, to bear witness to this catastrophe, and shortly after it took place became a member of the Brethren's church, in consequence of having seen so evidently the providence of God interposing for their protection. He related, that while swimming for his life he saw the chancellor floating down the river, caught hold of him by the gold chain he wore, and held him till a boat could come up. But when taken from the water he was quite dead, and the casket which contained the cruel decree was lost, and never found.

• History gives pleasing descriptions of the internal condition of the Brethren's church about this period. A Protestant clergyman, who wrote in the year 1559, speaks of them as follows:—"There is a people in Bohemia, who are known by the several names of Brethren, Picards, and Waldenses. They prohibit among themselves all banqueting, dancing, card-playing, and dice: and those who transgress their rules, after the second or third admonition, are rejected, and not received again till they have evinced their contrition in public. On working days every one is industriously busy; and on Sundays they meet for edification in the word of God. Many of their common people are more familiar with the Scriptures than many of our priests. They have persons among them appointed to attend the sick, whom they instruct, console, and wait upon. Where can we show anything like this among ourselves?" Another pious writer says, "Upon my return home from Strasburg into Poland, in the year 1581, I went a little out of my way through Bohemia, to visit the Brethren at Boleslav and Prague. Their senior elder was then John Caleph, a holy-looking man, as all this people are. I took particular notice

of everything, and inquired about all their concerns and institutions, and I could not help feeling as if I had come to the church of Ephesus or Thessalonica, among the primitive Christians. There I heard with my own ears, and was an eye-witness of just what we read of in the apostolical epistles, and in the writings of the earliest fathers."

The circumstance of the electoral prince Frédéric, of the palatinate, being chosen to the sovereignty of Bohemia, in 1619, gave the signal for the thirty-years' war; and as this prince had not a sufficient force to oppose the invasion of the emperor Ferdinand II., the Protestants of Bohemia became the chief objects of the imperial resentment, because they had voted against the will of the emperor. All evangelical ministers were expelled from Prague, and soon after from every part of Bohemia and Moravia; the churches which they had occupied were ceremoniously cleansed with the sprinkling of holy water; their pulpits and communion tables were chastened with rods; their sacramental chalices dishonoured; many thousands of their Bibles burned, with cart-loads of their books, under the gallows; and the bodies of their dead torn up from their graves, and exposed. Many suffered death with the faith and constancy of martyrs; others joyfully endured imprisonment, personal violence, or the spoiling of their goods, and willingly emigrated to other countries. The greatest part of the nobility left Bohemia, and about thirty thousand other families dispersed themselves in Lusatia, Saxony, Brandenburg, Prussia, Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania, where their numbers became very much lessened by numerous hardships. The Bohemian bishop, Amos Comenius, writes of these events as follows:—"The Lord visited them as with a tempest, and carried away, as by a midnight flood, their ancient and beautifully planted garden. He gave their nobles into captivity, and the blood of their elders to be shed like water. Of the many hundred churches that had been the joy and rejoicing of their heart, they had not one left.

The pastors were driven from their stations, and the shorn and shivering flocks consigned over to hirelings. Those who survived persecution were lost by being driven from their country. Nearly all the ministers of the churches, all the elders, bishops, superintendents, assistants, and superior helpers are gone, and I only am left, except that I have one colleague remaining in Poland."

Thus, there was preserved in Bohemia merely a small secreted remnant of the Brethren's church, who encouraged one another in evangelical truth, holding their meetings for worship only at night, in cellars and caves, and that under great peril and dread.

One of them, whose name was Christian David, a native of Moravia, and a carpenter by trade, having travelled into Lusatia, became acquainted with count Zinzendorf, who gave him permission, with some other brethren in the faith, to settle on his estate at Bertholdsdorf. He therefore left his country, in the year 1722, accompanied by several of the Brethren, with their wives and children; and, travelling by private roads, they arrived at the count's domain, where a convenient spot was assigned them, situated on a rising ground, called Hutberg, or Watch Hill. Christian David, striking his axe into a tree, immediately exclaimed, "Here the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest, even thine altars, O Lord of sabaoth," *Psa. lxxxiv.*; and on the 17th of June, with the assistance of his brethren, he felled the first piece of timber for their settlement, which now received the name of Herrnhut; or, "The Watch of the Lord;" implying that here they meant to abide under the Lord's watchful care, as well as to stand upon the Lord's watch in his service. Other brethren arrived thither from Moravia, and Herrnhut thus became so enlarged, that on the 12th of May, 1724, they were enabled to lay the foundation of their first house for meetings and business. Such was the humble commencement of the "Renewed Evangelical Unity of the Brethren of the Augsburg Confession;" for so was

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it now denominated. Their plan of management was arranged after the ancient discipline of the Brethren, as it had been carried on in their native country; and at their solemn communion of the Lord's supper, on the 13th of August, 1727, the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon this church was so powerfully and sensibly experienced, that this day has been annually solemnized ever since, as the most important memorial day of their history. In the year 1732, count Zinzendorf paid a visit to Herrnhut, and feeling immediately afterwards a desire to enter into the sacred ministry, was ordained as bishop of the Brethren's church, by bishop Jablonsky, at Berlin; and from that time to his death, in 1760, he devoted himself entirely to the service of the renewed church of the Brethren, which soon extended farther and farther abroad in Germany and other countries. Settlements, like that of Herrnhut, were formed in Germany, Holland, England, Denmark, and Russia, all of which are still closely and mutually connected by the same constitution and discipline, and superintended by elders. There are also many thousands of individual Christians who, though they reside at a distance from these several settlements, are united with them in spirit and love, in the same principles and the same mind. But after all, much as we are delighted to think of these churches, and of the amiable lives and works of their members, oppressed and despised as they have been by the world, we must not forget that the true church, as such, is at all periods an invisible one, composed of those of every name and denomination, who with the heart believe in Jesus Christ unto righteousness, being born again by the Spirit of God. For even those churches which have most exemplified the true church in doctrine, discipline, and conduct, have still retained many a blemish and imperfection in constitution and sentiment, and have had many dead members among them. The perfect state of the church is yet to come.

VIII.—MISSIONARY HISTORY OF THIS PERIOD.

IF the owner of a large garden were absent from it many years, and found it, upon his return, neglected and overgrown with thorns and briars, it is natural that he should commence cleansing and restoring, before he would think of making any addition to it from the surrounding waste. Similar to this was the situation of the reformers in the sixteenth century. They had so much to do in ridding the church of the corruptions of a thousand years, that they had little time to think of converting the millions of the heathen world. Luther, indeed, expressed himself much interested upon the subject, but any plan for it appeared in his time impracticable. Ernest, duke of Saxe-Gotha, surnamed the Pious, conceived a design of spreading the Lutheran doctrine in foreign countries. He obtained free exercise for the Lutheran worship in Russia; commenced a correspondence with the patriarch of Antioch; and sent, in the year 1663, a missionary to Egypt, who from that country was to go on to Abyssinia. He entertained Abba Gregorio, of Abyssinia, at his court for some time, with the view of forming an acquaintance with the Abyssinian emperor; yet, after all, he accomplished but little. The earliest association in Germany for the diffusion of the gospel in heathen countries was established by the baron Justinian von Welz. In the year 1664, he presented a petition to the Protestant states of Ratisbon, containing proposals relative to the conversion of pagans. But his attempt proving ineffectual, he formed a missionary society among his friends, to which he devoted from his personal property twenty-eight thousand eight hundred florins, and instituted missionary seminaries. At length he entered into holy orders, and, accompanied by several ministers, went on a mission to the West Indies, where he spent the remainder of his life

among the heathen. Even earlier than this, a similar attempt was unsuccessfully made by France to establish a mission in Brazil.

In 1647 was formed, in England, "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts;" and, in the year 1698, its sister "Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge." At the close of the seventeenth century was formed the "Danish Missiquery Society," which has sent its missionaries to Tranquebar. The names of Ziegenbalg and Swartz will be ever memorable in the history of missions. In 1721, the Danish missionary, Hans Egede, was constrained by the love of Christ to go to frozen Greenland, and there to build up the church of Christ, which had lain prostrate for centuries. John Elliot and David Brainerd laboured in the wilderness of the North American Indians, with a self-devotedness truly apostolic.

A peculiarly active missionary spirit soon began to stir in the renewed church of the Brethren at Herrnhut. Count Zinzendorf having met, at Copenhagen,



with a West Indian negro from the island of St. Thomas, and having been told by him how glad he's

sister, whom he had left there, would be to hear the gospel, this little incident suggested to the count, upon his return to Herrnhut, the first thought of commending the wants of the heathen to the hearts of his brethren.

A spirit of holy zeal having, for some years previous to this, been powerfully felt by several of the Brethren, they were prepared to embrace any opportunity of serving their Lord and Saviour, by acting as instruments in the deliverance of their fellow-men from the tyranny of heathen darkness; so that they very heartily welcomed the opportunity now presented to them. Hence two of the brethren, Leonard Dobeſ and David Nitschmann, natives of Moravia, went out on the 21st of August, 1732, as missionaries to the Negroes in the island of St. Thomas. Christian David, with Matthew and Christian Stach, departed for Greenland on the 19th of the following January. The next year missionaries were sent to the Indians of North America; in 1735, to Surinam and Berbice, in South America; and, in 1736, to South Africa, among the Hottentots. We give the details, to show how extended were the Christian designs of these simple-hearted men. These missionaries were merely humble mechanics, or peasants, who had been accustomed to few wants, and generally to a life of trial and hardship. It was of little account with them, whether their missionary stations were nearer home, or in the remotest parts of the world; whether they had to go to these stations by water or over-land; or whether they should be employed in a hot or cold climate. They had formed no great schemes or comprehensive plans; their simple intention was to win souls to Christ, and they were willing to spend a whole life in gaining only one soul. Neither was the missionary zeal of their church a mere momentary thing. After the unhealthy climate of the West Indies had swept off, within a short period, no fewer than twenty of their missionaries, the church at Herrnhut remained unwearied in filling up the vacant missionary stations; quite as many

as were wanted were always ready to go out; and to the present day there have ever been in the Brethren's church both men and women glad to go as missionaries to the Danish West India Islands, notwithstanding that, from the year 1732 to the year 1832, not less than one hundred and ninety have found their graves there. In the year 1754, the Brethren commenced a mission to the island of Jamaica; and, in 1756, to that of Antigua. Both of these missions have, under the Divine blessing, been very prosperous. In the year 1770, their first settlement on the coast of Labrador was established; others, about the same time, were formed in some of the British West India Islands.

All this, however, is but a part of what the Brethren have attempted. They have had their messengers in all quarters of the world, and have sought everywhere to kindle the fire of the love of Christ. Neither have they yielded to discouragement through the failure of many of their undertakings. At their earliest commencement, they despatched missionaries to the Laplanders in Sweden, to the negroes in Guinea and South Carolina, to the Christian slaves in Algiers, and to the Jews at Amsterdam. Others went to Ceylon, to Tranquebar, to the Nicobar Islands, to the Gauris in Persia, to the Coptic Christians in Egypt, and even attempted to enter Abyssinia. These, and several other missionary attempts, yielded indeed no permanent fruit, and were of necessity given up; but who can say that they were altogether in vain? In a word, from the year 1732 to 1832, the missions of the Brethren have occupied seven hundred and forty male, and four hundred and fifty-nine female labourers among the heathen; and they have at present two hundred and fourteen missionaries distributed in forty-two stations. So prosperous, under the smiles of Heaven, has a work been, which was commenced in simple faith above a century ago, by a little band of Moravian exiles; and the number of Greenlanders, Esquimaux, Indians, Negroes, Hottentots, and Caffres, who at this

moment are under the spiritual care of the Brethren's missionaries, amounting to forty-five thousand!

Of great extent, also, are the missionary labours of the Methodists, a religious society which sprang out of the English episcopal church. Their founders were John Wesley and George Whitefield, who insisted with great earnestness on the absolute necessity of true conversion to God, and of giving evidence of such conversion by our life and conversation. They afterwards formed separate societies, differing in some doctrinal points. The Wesleyans, a regularly organized and extensive body, rapidly increased to thousands and hundreds of thousands, and are found principally in England and North America. The Wesleyan missions are extensive in many foreign lands. Between the years 1790 and 1800 were formed in London, "The Baptist Missionary Society," and "The London Missionary Society." The former sent its first missionaries to India; the latter to Otaheite. Both of these societies have increased considerably; and the London Missionary Society, supported chiefly by the Independent churches, has now its messengers in several parts of the world, particularly the East Indies and South Seas, where God has especially blessed their labours. Their example was soon followed by the formation of a new missionary society among members of the English episcopal church, which is likewise casting its bread upon all waters in the four quarters of the globe. The General Baptists have also established a Missionary Society, which has been greatly useful in Orissa. A number of similar institutions in England, auxiliary to these, are co-operating in the great business of missions, and all are encouraged by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which is circulating the word of God in upwards of one hundred and fifty languages, and by millions of copies; and by the Tract Society, which has published tracts and books in more than eighty languages, and from the committee of which institution the Bible Society proceeded. Germany has at length been stirred up to partake in this

blessed work. Missionary seminaries and missionary societies have been formed at Basle, Barmen, and Berlin, which have already been enabled to send forth many labourers into the harvest. Nor are our Christian brethren of the United States less active than Christians in Europe; and the noble emulation of all these missionary associations is met everywhere by a corresponding desire, on the part of the heathen, to receive the word of life. The long obstructing barriers of the Burman empire, and of China with her three hundred and thirty millions of idolaters, are beginning to let in the gospel; the dark tribes of Africa are beginning to walk in the light; and the remote isles of the great South Sea, and of the Indian Ocean, are hearing the voice of the Almighty. A glorious and blessed time will, we are assured, ultimately come, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

IX.—BELIEVERS AND INFIDELS.

FAITH is so necessary a part of our mental constitution, that we cannot but believe in something. Though a man cast off his belief in God, yet he believes either in the devil or in himself, or in some figment of his imagination. When the true faith is rejected, though a person may ever so boldly profess himself an infidel, he will often betray superstitious fears in spite of himself. Infidelity and superstition, it is true, are mutual contrarieties, and yet they never really exist asunder. They may be compared to two menials under one roof, who are jealous of being preferred in their master's favour, and consequently cannot be kept in attendance together. But though they must necessarily be kept apart from each other, the one, whichever he is, that is not retained in waiting, practises every artifice to supplant the other in the master's attentions. It is a known fact, that the greatest freethinkers, as they call

themselves, who like the Sadducees of old, will believe next to nothing, not even the existence of the Deity, have at times been as superstitious and timid as silly children.

And truly the man who believes not in the Divine existence, has cause enough to be afraid; nor, probably, is the writer of these pages singular in thinking that if he could not, with all his heart, embrace the belief of that existence, he would soon die of fear about other things. Surely such infidels are punished already for their infidelity, by the very superstition of which they occasionally find it impossible to divest themselves. When popery, in former ages, possessed unlimited dominion over the Christian world, superstition indeed prevailed most; but even then, infidelity, or the refusal of the truth, was by no means a strange thing, for many of the popes themselves, and many of their ministers in those ages, were known infidels. Infidelity, however, existed *then* only in a covert manner; it did not dare to appear in the very face of a universally dominant superstition. But, *after* the Reformation, it showed its front more audaciously, inasmuch as liberty of belief had become protected by law, and heresy was no longer subject to those judicial severities which popery has ever adopted. The same country which sent to Germany the doctrines of the true faith, sent also in after times the poison of infidel opinions, though indeed they are the natural seeds of every soil. English materialists; namely, persons who can believe in design without a designer, and in contrivance without a contriver; and English deists, or persons who, disliking the God of the Bible, imagine to themselves a convenient God of their own, transmitted their publications across the ocean to Germany. French philosophers, and especially Voltaire, contributed to the same effect; and thus, both in France and in Germany, all the powers of wit and of learning were summoned to the work of undermining true Christianity. Hence that main truth of our holy religion, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, has sustained every imaginable

attack from infidels; nor less so that ~~and~~ truth, which is like unto it, namely, that Christ's death is the only true atonement for sin. And, indeed, near the close of the eighteenth century, while infidelity was devouring like a canker, things came to such a crisis, that the greater number of the authorized teachers of Christianity in Germany were secretly unbelievers in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; nay, they often dared to deny this doctrine in the pulpit.

Into what miseries such infidelity can easily plunge a whole community has been exemplified already in France, where the frightful scenes of the revolution, at the close of the last century, owed their origin primarily to the general spread of infidelity. It was a revolution which occasioned the premature death of hundreds of thousands, drove many more from their country, and was replete with a greater number of horrors to France and Europe, than any other national change in the history of man. The unnatural beings who at that period were at the helm of the French government emboldened one another to abolish the sabbath, with every other sacred observance; and to declare, by a public decree, that there is no God. The goddess of reason, who was personified by a lewd woman, was the only object of adoration. After a while, a new decree was passed, which allowed the worship of a God. About this time, in the debate of a revolutionary club at Nantes, upon the being of a God, it was proposed by the chairman, that those present who believed in a God should signify it by holding up their hands; and the only person among them who had the courage to do so was an old woman. People, however, so far returned to reason, as to be willing to admit the existence of some "Supreme Being," though not the God of revelation. Much was now talked of holding a festival in honour of this Supreme Being.

About this time, a little boy in Paris, having committed a theft, and being interrogated by his mother as to what could have induced him so to disgrace himself, replied, with simplicity, that he wished to enjoy the

pleasure of stealing something before God should be restored to his place, for then nobody would dare to steal. A gang of thieves, who had broken into the house of a person of property at Blancart, tied the master of the house hand and foot, laid him on the ground, and heaped empty sacks upon him. The unhappy man crying out that he should be suffocated, one of the gang proposed to put an end to him. "Oh," said the agonizing man, "give me time to commit my soul to God!" "What!" they answered, "dare you talk of God? Don't you know that the nation have decreed there is no God?" Then abusing him as a traitor to the laws, they beat him most unmercifully with their bludgeons, and he was found lying in a helpless state, and covered with bruises.

Such are some of the fruits of infidelity, but they are not the worst. And who was it that healed Germany of this poison? Certainly it was no other than He who alone can heal all our diseases. But how did he accomplish it? Here we may say, with propriety, that "out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," Judg. xiv. 14. That devourer was Napoleon, emperor of the French, a man singular of his kind. He had held nations for years together under anxiety and oppression, especially Germany; and when God, in a marvellous manner, delivered them from his yoke, they began once more to see that He is Lord of heaven and earth, and to give glory to his name. From that time many of all descriptions have avowed themselves the friends of Christianity; the cause of the Bible and of Missions has stirred up a kind of new life in many places; great numbers of good Christian books have been put into wide circulation, and here and there the work of the Spirit of God has not been left without witness. Still all is far from being a paradise; and whoever wishes to commend the present age must lose no time, for there is a great conflict between light and darkness, the issue of which cannot at present be seen. Only this is certain, that the ultimate triumph is reserved

for the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom; though, before it shall arrive, we may have to encounter against the powers of darkness the most desperate struggle of all; and what we enjoy, at present, of gospel light and means of grace, may be once more superseded by a night of terror to all Europe. It behoves us, therefore, to make a faithful use of the blessings with which we are favoured, while we have them.

X.—THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, WITH REFERENCE TO THE POPULATION OF THE GLOBE.

WE have thus cursorily reviewed the eighteen centuries of Christian History, and noticed, in very circumscribed limits, the extension and past destinies of the church of Christ. We shall close our considerations with a brief glance at its present relation to the world at large.

The course of the sun, the peopling of the globe, and the spread of the gospel, have all along taken much the same direction; that is to say, from east to west. Asia, from whence the great light originally proceeded, has been all along, and is still, for the most part overshadowed with the dark clouds of heathen superstition. Ever since the bright sun of Christianity advanced further into the west, Mohammedanism has ruled over Palestine and Syria, Asia Minor and Persia; and the Christians who have still maintained their existence under Mohammedan tyranny, the Greeks and Nestorians, the Jacobites or Armenian Christians, and the Maronites on Lebanon, possess such a dead or defective Christianity, as hardly deserves a better comparison. Arabia, and a part of the nations along the Indus and the Ganges, still adhere to the false prophet Mohammed; the rest of the population of India, to the very confines of China, are sunk in Brahminical, or Buddhistical idolatry. Paganism prevails in a variety of forms over the three hundred and thirty

millions of the Chinese empire; and over the lofty mountains of Tibet to the northern boundary of Asia, the religion of the Dalai Lama has continued its sway. This religion in the southern parts appears like a pagan counterpart to popery, and further on degenerates into the most absurd ceremonies. Thus nearly the whole Asiatic quarter of the globe, with the exception of a few dead Christian sects, is one entire mass of wretched idolatry; and only from the edge of its southern shores does the light of the gospel begin, by the labours of the missionaries, to shine into the thick and manifold darkness. A vast moral desert must yet be traversed before its beams can meet the few luminous points in Syria, Mount Caucasus, Persia, and on the borders of the Aral Lake.

Africa may also be compared to the large dark moth called the pall butterfly, with its black wings edged by a bright border. Its interior regions appear to be peopled with unnumbered and unknown tribes of pagan idolaters and Mohammedans; but it is bordered with a few bright spots upon its coasts, from which the light of Divine truth is here and there working its way into the interior, and labouring to dispel the darkness of many centuries. In Egypt and Abyssinia are still found, intermingled with Mohammedans, a body of Coptic Christians, (Jacobites,) among whom missionaries from Europe are endeavouring to resuscitate their ancient and nearly departed spiritual life. On the north coast of Africa, which once abounded with flourishing Christian communities, two small lights have of late been rekindled. On its western coast, the bright shining of the gospel is visible in several places; and, from the south, whole successions of Christian messengers are penetrating with their gospel torches farther and farther into the region of ancient night.

In Europe, we hope to see the classical and beautiful realm of Greece soon recover from the torpor brought upon it by the Mohammedan yoke; but its stirring has served at present to do little more than to show how it is benumbed and stupified with error. Ignorance and superstition still, for the most part, prevail in Russia.

A part of Hungary, and Transylvania; the whole of Dalmatia and Illyria, Austria and Italy; part of Switzerland; a great portion of Germany; also Bohemia, Moravia, Poland, France, Spain, Portugal, and we may almost say Ireland, are still included within the pale of the Roman Catholic or papal church. But the greater part of North, and a portion of South Germany, part of Switzerland, and part of France, the whole of England and Scotland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, pertain to various sections of Protestants.

In the United States of North America there yet remain some small bodies of pagans among the Indians, and an increasing number of Roman Catholics. The chief part of the population is Protestant, though consisting of a great variety of sects, since full religious liberty prevails among them. South America became a province of the Roman Catholic church principally through the labours of the Jesuits; there are still, however, some tribes of pagans in the interior.

Many islands of the Pacific Ocean have been brought under religious culture by Protestant missionaries, and the kingdom of Christ has gained extensive and glorious triumphs there.

Finally, if we compute the population of the globe at a thousand millions, at this present time there are at least six hundred millions of heathen idolaters, and not much more than two hundred and fifty millions who profess Christianity! But how many or how few of these are real Christians, is known only to Him who knoweth the hearts of all men. Their number, it is evident, must be small indeed, ~~as~~ compared with the population of the globe; yet these few are as the little leaven which sooner or later shall leaven the whole mass of mankind. Divine prophecy must have its fulfilment in due time, and will at length be made manifest in its fullest import. "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry," Hab. ii. 3.

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